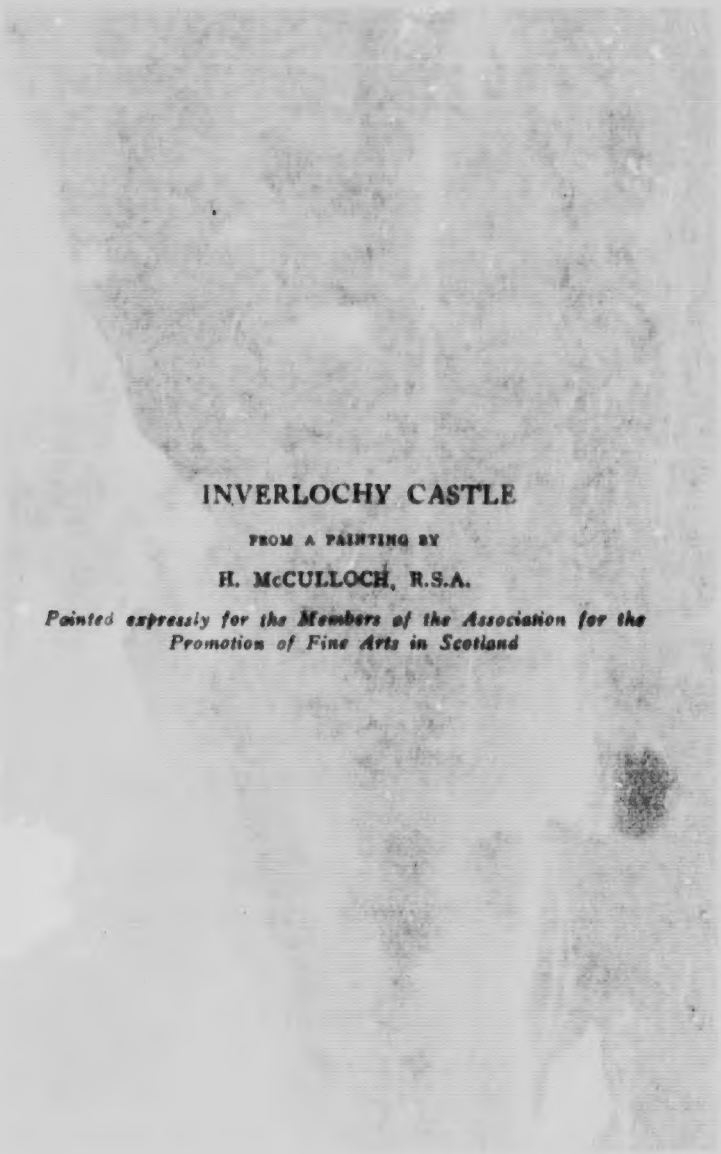

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TO

HIS LOVING COUNTRYMEN,

WHETHER THEY ARE DENOMINATED

MEN OF THE SOUTH,

GENTLEMEN OF THE NORTH,

PEOPLE OF THE WEST,

OR

FOLK OF FIFE,

THESE TALES,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF ANCIENT SCOTTISH MANNERS,

AND OF THE

TRADITIONS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS,

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FRIEND AND LIEGE FELLOW-SUBJECT,

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM

TALES OF MY LANDLORD

First Series

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's,
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it;
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
An' faith he'll prent it!

BURNS.

Ahora bien, dixo il Cura, traedme, senor huésped, aquesos libros, que los quiero ver. Que me place, respondió el, y entrando en su aposento, sacó dél una maletilla vieja cerrada con una cadenilla, y abriéndola halló en ella tres libros grandes y unos papeles de muy buena letra escritos de mano. — DON QUIXOTE, Parte I. Capitulo xxxii.

It is mighty well, said the priest; pray, landlord, bring me those books, for I have a mind to see them. With all my heart, answered the host; and going to his chamber, he brought out a little old cloke-bag, with a padlock and chain to it, and opening it, he took out three large volumes, and some manuscript papers written in a fine character. — JARVIS'S *Translation.*

TALES OF MY LANDLORD

COLLECTED AND REPORTED BY

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM,

SCHOOLMASTER AND PARISH-CLERK OF GANDERCLEUGH

INTRODUCTION

AS I may, without vanity, presume that the name and official description prefixed to this Proem will secure it, from the sedate and reflecting part of mankind, to whom only I would be understood to address myself, such attention as is due to the sedulous instructor of youth and the careful performer of my Sabbath duties, I will forbear to hold up a candle to the daylight, or to point out to the judicious those recommendations of my labours which they must necessarily anticipate from the perusal of the title-page. Nevertheless, I am not unaware that, as Envy always dogs Merit at the heels, there may be those who will whisper that, albeit my learning and good principles cannot (lauded be the heavens!) be denied by any one, yet that my situation at Gandercleugh hath been more favourable to my acquisitions in learning than to the enlargement of my views of the ways and works of the present generation. To the which objection, if, peradventure, any such shall be started, my answer shall be threefold:

First, Gandercleugh is, as it were, the central part — the navel (*si fas sit dicere*) — of this our native realm of Scotland; so that men from every corner thereof, when travelling on their concernments of business, either towards our metropolis of law, by which I mean Edinburgh, or towards our metropolis and mart of gain, whereby I insinuate Glasgow, are frequently led to

make Gandercleugh their abiding stage and place of rest for the night. And it must be acknowledged by the most sceptical that I, who have sat in the leathern arm-chair, on the left-hand side of the fire, in the common room of the Wallace Inn, winter and summer, for every evening in my life, during forty years bypast (the Christian Sabbaths only excepted), must have seen more of the manners and customs of various tribes and people than if I had sought them out by my own painful travel and bodily labour. Even so doth the toll-man at the well-frequented turnpike on the Wellbrae head, sitting at his ease in his own dwelling, gather more receipt of custom than if, moving forth upon the road, he were to require a contribution from each person whom he chanced to meet in his journey, when, according to the vulgar adage, he might possibly be greeted with more kicks than halfpence.

But, secondly, supposing it again urged, that Ithacus, the most wise of the Greeks, acquired his renown, as the Roman poet hath assured us, by visiting states and men, I reply to the Zoilus who shall adhere to this objection, that, *de facto*, I have seen states and men also; for I have visited the famous cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the former twice and the latter three times, in the course of my earthly pilgrimage. And, moreover, I had the honour to sit in the General Assembly (meaning, as an auditor, in the galleries thereof), and have heard as much goodly speaking on the law of patronage as, with the fructification thereof in mine own understanding, hath made me be considered as an oracle upon that doctrine ever since my safe and happy return to Gandercleugh.

Again, and thirdly, If it be nevertheless pretended that my information and knowledge of mankind howe er extensive, and however painfully acquired, by constant domestic inquiry and by foreign travel, is, natheless, incompetent to the task of recording the pleasant narratives of my Landlord, I will let these critics know, to their own eternal shame and confusion, as well as to the abashment and discomfiture of all who shall rashly take up a song against me, that I am NOT the writer, redactor, or compiler, of the Tales of my Landlord; nor am I, in one single iota, answerable for their contents, more or less. And now, ye generation of critics, who raise yourselves up as if it were brazen serpents, to hiss with your tongues and to smite with your stings, bow yourselves down to your native dust and acknowledge that yours have been the thoughts of ignorance and the words of vain foolishness. Lo! ye are caught in your

own snare, and your own pit hath yawned for you. Turn, then, aside from the task that is too heavy for you; destroy not your teeth by gnawing a file; waste not your strength by spurning against a castle wall; nor spend your breath in contending in swiftness with a fleet steed; and let those weigh the Tales of my Landlord who shall bring with them the scales of candour cleansed from the rust of prejudice by the hands of intelligent modesty. For these alone they were compiled, as will appear from a brief narrative which my zeal for truth compelled me to make supplementary to the present Proem.

It is well known that my Landlord was a pleasing and a facetious man, acceptable unto all the parish of Gandercleugh, excepting only the Laird, the Exciseman, and those for whom he refused to draw liquor upon trust. Their causes of dislike I will touch separately, adding my own refutation thereof.

His honour, the Laird, accused our Landlord, deceased, of having encouraged, in various times and places, the destruction of hares, rabbits, fowls black and grey, partridges, moor-pouts, roe-deer, and other birds and quadrupeds, at unlawful seasons, and contrary to the laws of this realm, which have secured, in their wisdom, the slaughter of such animals for the great of the earth, whom I have remarked to take an uncommon (though to me an unintelligible) pleasure therein. Now, in humble deference to his honour, and in justifiable defence of my friend deceased, I reply to this charge, that howsoever the form of such animals might appear to be similar to those so protected by the law, yet it was a mere *deceptio visus*; for what resembled hares were, in fact, hill-kids, and those partaking of the appearance of moor-fowl were truly wood-pigeons, and consumed and eaten *eo nomine*, and not otherwise.

Again, the Exciseman pretended that my deceased Landlord did encourage that species of manufacture called distillation, without having an especial permission from the great, technically called a license, for doing so. Now, I stand up to confront this falsehood; and in defiance of him, his gauging-stick, and pen and inkhorn, I tell him, that I never saw or tasted a glass of unlawful aquavitæ in the house of my Landlord; nay, that, on the contrary, we needed not such devices, in respect of a pleasing and somewhat seductive liquor which was vended and consumed at the Wallace Inn under the name of 'mountain dew.' If there is a penalty against manufacturing such a liquor, let him show me the statute; and when he does I'll tell him if I will obey it or no.

Concerning those who came to my Landlord for liquor and went thirsty away, for lack of present coin or future credit, I cannot but say it has grieved my bowels as if the case had been mine own. Nevertheless, my Landlord considered the necessities of a thirsty soul, and would permit them, in extreme need, and when their soul was impoverished for lack of moisture, to drink to the full value of their watches and wearing apparel, exclusively of their inferior habiliments, which he was uniformly inexorable in obliging them to retain, for the credit of the house. As to mine own part, I may well say that he never refused me that modicum of refreshment with which I am wont to recruit nature after the fatigues of my school. It is true, I taught his five sons English and Latin, writing, book-keeping, with a tincture of mathematics, and that I instructed his daughter in psalmody. Nor do I remember me of any fee or *honorarium* received from him on account of these my labours, except the compotations aforesaid. Nevertheless this compensation suited my humour well, since it is a hard sentence to bid a dry throat wait till quarter-day.

But, truly, were I to speak my simple conceit and belief, I think my Landlord was chiefly moved to waive in my behalf the usual requisition of a symbol or reckoning from the pleasure he was wont to take in my conversation, which, though solid and edifying in the main, was, like a well-built palace, decorated with facetious narratives and devices, tending much to the enhancement and ornament thereof. And so pleased was my Landlord of the Wallace in his replies during such colloquies, that there was no district in Scotland, yea, and no peculiar, and, as it were, distinctive custom therein practised, but was discussed betwixt us: insomuch that those who stood by were wont to say it was worth a bottle of ale to hear us communicate with each other. And not a few travellers from distant parts, as well as from the remote districts of our kingdom, were wont to mingle in the conversation, and to tell news that had been gathered in foreign lands, or preserved from oblivion in this our own.

Now I chanced to have contracted for teaching the lower classes with a young person called Peter or Patrick Pattieson, who had been educated for our Holy Kirk, yea, had, by the license of presbytery, his voice opened therein as a preacher, who delighted in the collection of olden tales and legends, and in garnishing them with the flowers of poesy, whereof he was a vain and frivolous professor. For he followed not the example

of those strong poets whom I proposed to him as a pattern, but formed versification of a flimsy and modern texture, to the compounding whereof was necessary small pains and less thought. And hence I have chid him as being one of those who bring forward the fatal revolution prophesied by Mr. Robert Carey, in his vaticination on the death of the celebrated Dr. John Donne:

> Now thou art gone, and thy strict laws will be
> Too hard for libertines in poetry;
> Till verse (by thee refined) in this last age
> Turn ballad rhyme.

I had also disputations with him touching his indulging rather a flowing and redundant than a concise and stately diction in his prose exercitations. But notwithstanding these symptoms of inferior taste, and a humour of contradicting his betters upon passages of dubious construction in Latin authors, I did grievously lament when Peter Pattieson was removed from me by death, even as if he had been the offspring of my own loins. And in respect his papers had been left in my care (to answer funeral and death-bed expenses), I conceived myself entitled to dispose of one parcel thereof, entitled 'Tales of my Landlord,' to one cunning in the trade (as it is called) of bookselling. He was a mirthful man, of small stature, cunning in counterfeiting of voices, and in making facetious tales and responses, and whom I have to laud for the truth of his dealings towards me.

Now, therefore, the world may see the injustice that charges me with incapacity to write these narratives, seeing that, though I have proved that I could have written them if I would, yet, not having done so, the censure will deservedly fall, if at all due, upon the memory of Mr. Peter Pattieson: whereas I must be justly entitled to the praise, when any is due, seeing that, as the Dean of St. Patrick's wittily and logically expresseth it,

> That without which a thing is not
> Is *causa sine quâ non*.

The work, therefore, is unto me as a child is to a parent; in the which child, if it proveth worthy, the parent hath honour and praise: but, if otherwise, the disgrace will deservedly attach to itself alone.

I have only further to intimate that Mr. Peter Pattieson, in arranging these Tales for the press, hath more consulted his

own fancy than the accuracy of the narrative; nay, that he hath sometimes blended two or three stories together for the mere grace of his plots. Of which infidelity, although I disapprove and enter my testimony against it, yet I have not taken upon me to correct the same, in respect it was the will of the deceased that his manuscript should be submitted to the press without diminution or alteration. A fanciful nicety it was on the part of my deceased friend, who, if thinking wisely, ought rather to have conjured me, by all the tender ties of our friendship and common pursuits, to have carefully revised, altered, and augmented at my judgment and discretion. But the will of the dead must be scrupulously obeyed, even when we weep over their pertinacity and self-delusion. So, gentle reader, I bid you farewell, recommending you to such fare as the mountains of your own country produce; and I will only farther premise, that each Tale is preceded by a short introduction, mentioning the persons by whom, and the circumstances under which, the materials thereof were collected.

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM.

THE BLACK DWARF

INTRODUCTION TO THE BLACK DWARF

THE ideal being who is here presented as residing in solitude, and haunted by a consciousness of his own deformity and a suspicion of his being generally subjected to the scorn of his fellow-men, is not altogether imaginary. An individual existed many years since, under the Author's observation, which suggested such a character. This poor unfortunate man's name was David Ritchie, a native of Tweeddale. He was the son of a labourer in the slate-quarries of Stobo, and must have been born in the misshapen form which he exhibited, though he sometimes imputed it to ill-usage when in infancy. He was bred a brush-maker at Edinburgh, and had wandered to several places, working at his trade, from all which he was chased by the disagreeable attention which his hideous singularity of form and face attracted wherever he came. The Author understood him to say he had even been in Dublin.

Tired at length of being the object of shouts, laughter, and derision, David Ritchie resolved, like a deer hunted from the herd, to retreat to some wilderness, where he might have the least possible communication with the world which scoffed at him. He settled himself, with this view, upon a patch of wild moorland at the bottom of a bank on the farm of Woodhouse, in the sequestered vale of the small river Manor, in Peeblesshire. The few people who had occasion to pass that way were much surprised, and some superstitious persons a little alarmed, to see so strange a figure as Bow'd Davie (*i.e.* Crooked David) employed in a task for which he seemed so totally unfit as that of erecting a house. The cottage which he built was extremely small, but the walls, as well as those of a little garden that surrounded it, were constructed with an ambitious degree of solidity, being composed of layers of large stones and turf; and some of the corner stones were so weighty as to puzzle the spectators how such a person as the architect could

possibly have raised them. In fact, David received from passengers, or those who came attracted by curiosity, a good deal of assistance; and as no one knew how much aid had been given by others, the wonder of each individual remained undiminished.

The proprietor of the ground, the late Sir James Nasmythe, Baronet, chanced to pass this singular dwelling, which, having been placed there without right or leave asked or given, formed an exact parallel with Falstaff's simile of a 'fair house built on another's ground'; so that poor David might have lost his edifice by mistaking the property where he had erected it. Of course, the proprietor entertained no idea of exacting such a forfeiture, but readily sanctioned the harmless encroachment.

The personal description of Elshender of Mucklestane Moor has been generally allowed to be a tolerably exact and unexaggerated portrait of David of Manor Water. He was not quite three feet and a half high, since he could stand upright in the door of his mansion, which was just that height. The following particulars concerning his figure and temper occur in the *Scots Magazine* for 1817, and are now understood to have been communicated by the ingenious Mr. Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, who has recorded with much spirit the traditions of the Good Town, and, in other publications, largely and agreeably added to the stock of our popular antiquities. He is the countryman of David Ritchie, and had the best access to collect anecdotes of him.

'His skull,' says this authority, 'which was of an oblong and rather unusual shape, was of such strength that he could strike it with ease through the panel of a door or the end of a tar-barrel. His laugh is said to have been quite horrible; and his screech-owl voice, shrill, uncouth, and dissonant, corresponded well with his other peculiarities.

'There was nothing very uncommon about his dress. He usually wore an old slouched hat when he went abroad; and when at home a sort of cowl or night-cap. He never wore shoes, being unable to adapt them to his misshapen fin-like feet, but always had both feet and legs quite concealed, and wrapt up with pieces of cloth. He always walked with a sort of pole or pike-staff, considerably taller than himself. His habits were, in many respects, singular, and indicated a mind congenial to its uncouth tabernacle. A jealous, misanthropical, and irritable temper was his most prominent characteristic. The sense of his deformity haunted him like a phantom; and the insults and scorn to which this exposed him had poisoned his heart with fierce and bitter feelings, which, from other traits in his character, do not appear to have been more largely infused into his original temperament than that of his fellow-men.

'He detested children, on account of their propensity to insult and

DAVID RITCHIE, PROTOTYPE OF THE BLACK DA

From a painting by Clerk.

persecute him. To strangers he was generally reserved, crabbed, and surly; and though he by no means refused assistance or charity, he on many occasions neither expressed nor exhibited much gratitude. Even towards persons who had been his greatest benefactors, and who possessed the greatest share of his good-will, he frequently displayed much caprice and jealousy. A lady who knew him from his infancy, and who has furnished us in the most obliging manner with some particulars respecting him, says that, although Davie showed as much respect and attachment to her father's family as it was in his nature to show to any, yet they were always obliged to be very cautious in their deportment towards him. One day, having gone to visit him with another lady, he took them through his garden, and was showing them, with much pride and good-humour, all his rich and tastefully-assorted borders, when they happened to stop near a plot of cabbages which had been somewhat injured by the caterpillars. Davie, observing one of the ladies smile, instantly assumed his savage, scowling aspect, rushed among the cabbages, and dashed them to pieces with his *foot*, exclaiming, "I hate the worms, for they mock me!"

'Another lady, likewise a friend and old acquaintance of his, very unintentionally gave him mortal offence on a similar occasion. Throwing back his jealous glance,' as he was ushering her into his garden, 'he fancied he saw her spit at him. "Am I a toad, woman! that ye spit at me — that ye spit at me?" he exclaimed with fury, and without listening to any answer, drove her out of his garden with imprecations and insult. When irritated by persons for whom he entertained little respect, his misanthropy displayed itself in words, and sometimes actions, of still greater rudeness'; and he used on such occasions the most unusual and singularly savage imprecations and threats.[1]

Nature maintains a certain balance of good and evil in all her works: and there is no state perhaps so utterly desolate which does not possess some source of gratification peculiar to itself. This poor man, whose misanthropy was founded in a sense of his own preternatural deformity, had yet his own particular enjoyments. Driven into solitude, he became an admirer of the beauties of nature. His garden, which he sedulously cultivated, and from a piece of wild moorland made a very productive spot, was his pride and his delight: but he was also an admirer of more natural beauty: the soft sweep of the green hill, the bubbling of a clear fountain, or the complexities of a wild thicket, were scenes on which he often gazed for hours, and, as he said, with inexpressible delight. It was perhaps for this reason that he was fond of Shenstone's pastorals and some parts of *Paradise Lost*. The Author has heard his most unmusical voice repeat the celebrated description of Paradise, which he seemed fully to appreciate. His other studies were of a different cast, chiefly polemical. He never went to the parish church, and

[1] *Scots Magazine*, vol. i., New Series, 1817, p. 207.

was therefore suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions, though his objection was probably to the concourse of spectators to whom he must have exposed his unseemly deformity. He spoke of a future state with intense feeling, and even with tears. He expressed disgust at the idea of his remains being mixed with the common rubbish, as he called it, of the churchyard, and selected with his usual taste a beautiful and wild spot in the glen where he had his hermitage, in which to take his last repose. He changed his mind, however, and was finally interred in the common burial-ground of Manor parish.

The Author has invested Wise Elshie with some qualities which made him appear, in the eyes of the vulgar, a man possessed of supernatural power. Common fame paid David Ritchie a similar compliment, for some of the poor and ignorant, as well as all the children, in the neighbourhood, held him to be what is called 'uncanny.' He himself did not altogether discourage the idea; it enlarged his very limited circle of power, and in so far gratified his conceit; and it soothed his misanthropy, by increasing his means of giving terror or pain. But even in a rude Scottish glen thirty years back the fear of sorcery was very much out of date.

David Ritchie affected to frequent solitary scenes, especially such as were supposed to be haunted, and valued himself upon his courage in doing so. To be sure, he had little chance of meeting anything more ugly than himself. At heart he was superstitious, and planted many rowans (mountain ashes) around his hut, as a certain defence against necromancy. For the same reason, doubtless, he desired to have rowan-trees set above his grave.

We have stated that David Ritchie loved objects of natural beauty. His only living favourites were a dog and a cat, to which he was particularly attached, and his bees, which he tended with great care. He took a sister, latterly, to live in a hut adjacent to his own, but he did not permit her to enter it. She was weak in intellect, but not deformed in person; simple, or rather silly, but not, like her brother, sullen or bizarre. David was never affectionate to her — it was not in his nature; but he endured her. He maintained himself and her by the sale of the produce of their garden and bee-hives: and, latterly, they had a small allowance from the parish. Indeed, in the simple and patriarchal state in which the country then was, persons in the situation of David and his sister were sure to be supported. They had only to apply to the next gentleman or respectable

farmer, and were sure to find them equally ready and willing to supply their very moderate wants. David often received gratuities from strangers, which he never asked, never refused, and never seemed to consider as an obligation. He had a right, indeed, to regard himself as one of Nature's paupers, to whom she gave a title to be maintained by his kind, even by that deformity which closed against him all ordinary ways of supporting himself by his own labour. Besides, a bag was suspended in the mill for David Ritchie's benefit; and those who were carrying home a melder of meal seldom failed to add a gowpen to the alms-bag of the deformed cripple. In short, David had no occasion for money, save to purchase snuff, his only luxury, in which he indulged himself liberally. When he died, in the beginning of the present century, he was found to have hoarded about twenty pounds, a habit very consistent with his disposition; for wealth is power, and power was what David Ritchie desired to possess, as a compensation for his exclusion from human society.

His sister survived till the publication of the tale to which this brief notice forms the introduction; and the Author is sorry to learn that a sort of 'local sympathy,' and the curiosity then expressed concerning the Author of *Waverley* and the subjects of his Novels, exposed the poor woman to inquiries which gave her pain. When pressed about her brother's peculiarities, she asked, in her turn, why they would not permit the dead to rest? To others, who pressed for some account of her parents, she answered in the same tone of feeling.

The Author saw this poor, and, it may be said, unhappy, man in autumn 1797. Being then, as he has the happiness still to remain, connected by ties of intimate friendship with the family of the venerable Dr. Adam Fergusson, the philosopher and historian, who then resided at the mansion-house of Halyards, in the vale of Manor, about a mile from Ritchie's hermitage, the Author was upon a visit at Halyards, which lasted for several days, and was made acquainted with this singular anchorite, whom Dr. Fergusson considered as an extraordinary character, and whom he assisted in various ways, particularly by the occasional loan of books. Though the taste of the philosopher and the poor peasant did not, it may be supposed, always correspond,[1] Dr. Fergusson considered him

[1] I remember David was particularly anxious to see a book which he called, I think, *Letters to the Elect Ladies*, and which, he said, was the best composition he had ever read; but Dr. Fergusson's library did not supply the volume.

as a man of a powerful capacity and original ideas, but whose mind was thrown off its just bias by a predominant degree of self-love and self-opinion, galled by the sense of ridicule and contempt, and avenging itself upon society, in idea at least, by a gloomy misanthropy.

David Ritchie, besides the utter obscurity of his life while in existence, had been dead for many years when it occurred to the Author that such a character might be made a powerful agent in fictitious narrative. He accordingly sketched that of Elshie of the Mucklestane Moor. The story was intended to be longer, and the catastrophe more artificially brought out; but a friendly critic, to whose opinion I subjected the work in its progress, was of opinion that the idea of the Solitary was of a kind too revolting, and more likely to disgust than to interest the reader. As I had good right to consider my adviser as an excellent judge of public opinion, I got off my subject by hastening the story to an end as fast as it was possible; and, by huddling into one volume a tale which was designed to occupy two, have perhaps produced a narrative as much disproportioned and distorted as the Black Dwarf who is its subject.

THE BLACK DWARF

CHAPTER I

Preliminary

Hast any philosophy in thee, Shepherd?

As You Like It.

IT was a fine April morning (excepting that it had snowed hard the night before, and the ground remained covered with a dazzling mantle of six inches in depth) when two horsemen rode up to the Wallace Inn. The first was a strong, tall, powerful man in a grey riding-coat, having a hat covered with wax-cloth, a huge silver-mounted horsewhip, boots, and dreadnought overalls. He was mounted on a large strong brown mare, rough in coat, but well in condition, with a saddle of the yeomanry cut and a double-bitted military bridle. The man who accompanied him was apparently his servant; he rode a shaggy little grey pony, had a blue bonnet on his head, and a large check napkin folded about his neck, wore a pair of long blue worsted hose instead of boots, had his gloveless hands much stained with tar, and observed an air of deference and respect towards his companion, but without any of those indications of precedence and punctilio which are preserved between the gentry and their domestics. On the contrary, the two travellers entered the courtyard abreast, and the concluding sentence of the conversation which had been carrying on betwixt them was a joint ejaculation, 'Lord guide us, an this weather last what will come o' the lambs!' The hint was sufficient for my Landlord, who, advancing to take the horse of the principal person, and holding him by the reins as he dismounted, while his hostler rendered the same service to the attendant, welcomed the stranger to Gandercleugh, and

in the same breath inquired, 'What news from the South Hielands?'

'News?' said the farmer, 'bad eneugh news, I think. An we can carry through the yowes it will be a' we can do; we maun e'en leave the lambs to the Black Dwarf's care.'

'Ay, ay,' subjoined the old shepherd (for such he was), shaking his head, 'he 'll be unco busy amang the morts this season.'

'The Black Dwarf!' said *my learned friend and patron*,[1] Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, 'and what sort of a personage may he be?'

'Hout awa', man,' answered the farmer, 'ye 'll hae heard o' Canny Elshie the Black Dwarf, or I am muckle mistaen. A' the warld tells tales about him, but it 's but daft nonsense after a'; I dinna believe a word o't frae beginning to end.'

'Your father believed it unco stievely, though,' said the old man, to whom the scepticism of his master gave obvious displeasure.

'Ay, very true, Bauldie, but that was in the time o' the blackfaces; they believed a hantle queer things in thae days, that naebody heeds since the lang sheep cam in.'

'The mair 's the pity — the mair 's the pity,' said the old man. 'Your father — and sae I have aften tell'd ye, maister — wad hae been sair vexed to hae seen the auld peel-house wa's pu'd down to make park dykes; and the bonny broomy knowe, where he liked sae weel to sit at e'en, wi' his plaid about him, and look at the kye as they cam down the loaning — ill wad he hae liked to hae seen that braw sunny knowe a' riven out wi' the pleugh in the fashion it is at this day.'

'Hout, Bauldie,' replied the principal, 'tak ye that dram the landlord 's offering ye, and never fash your head about the changes o' the warld, sae lang as ye 're blythe and bien yoursell.'

'Wussing your health, sirs,' said the shepherd; and having taken off his glass, and observed the whisky was the right thing, he continued, 'It 's no for the like o' us to be judging, to be sure; but it was a bonny knowe that broomy knowe, and an unco braw shelter for the lambs in a severe morning like this.'

'Ay,' said his patron, 'but ye ken we maun hae turnips for the lang sheep, billie, and muckle hard wark to get them, baith wi' the pleugh and the howe; and that wad sort ill wi' sitting on the broomy knowe and cracking about Black Dwarfs and

[1] See Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham's Interpolations. Note 1.

siccan clavers, as was the gate lang syne, when the short sheep were in the fashion.'

'Aweel, aweel, maister,' said the attendant, 'short sheep had short rents, I 'm thinking.'

Here my *worthy and learned* patron again interposed, and observed, 'that he could never perceive any material difference in point of longitude between one sheep and another.'

This occasioned a loud hoarse laugh on the part of the farmer, and an astonished stare on the part of the shepherd. 'It 's the woo', man — it 's the woo', and no the beasts themsells, that makes them be ca'd lang or short. I believe if ye were to measure their backs the short sheep wad be rather the langer-bodied o' the twa; but it 's the woo' that pays the rent in thae days, and it had muckle need. Odd, Bauldie says very true,' he continued after a moment's reflection, 'short sheep did make short rents; my father paid for our steading just threescore punds, and it stands me in three hundred, plack and bawbee. And that 's very true, I hae nae time to be standing here clavering. Landlord, get us our breakfast, and see an' get the yauds fed. I am for doun to Christy Wilson's, to see if him and me can gree about the luck penny I am to gie him for his year-aulds. We had drank sax mutchkins to the making the bargain at St. Boswell's Fair, and some gate we canna gree upon the particulars preceesely, for as muckle time as we took about it; I doubt we draw to a plea. But hear ye, neighbour,' addressing my *worthy and learned* patron, 'if ye want to hear ony thing about lang or short sheep, I will be back here to my kail against ane o'clock; or, if ye want ony auld-warld stories about the Black Dwarf, and sic-like, if ye 'll ware a half mutchkin upon Bauldie there, he 'll crack t' ye like a pen-gun. And I 'se gie ye a mutchkin mysell, man, if I can settle weel wi' Christy Wilson.'

The farmer returned at the hour appointed, and with him came Christy Wilson, their difference having been fortunately settled without an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe. My *learned and worthy* patron failed not to attend, both on account of the refreshment promised to the mind and to the body, *although he is known to partake of the latter in a very moderate degree;* and the party, with which my Landlord was associated, continued to sit late in the evening, seasoning their liquor with many choice tales and songs. The last incident which I recollect was my *learned and worthy* patron falling from his chair, just as he concluded a long lecture upon temperance,

by reciting from the *Gentle Shepherd* a couplet, which he might happily transferred from the vice of avarice to that of ebriety:

> He that has just eneugh may soundly sleep,
> The owercome only fashes folk to keep.

In the course of the evening the Black Dwarf[1] had not been forgotten, and the old shepherd, Bauldie, told so many stories of him that they excited a good deal of interest. It also appeared, though not till the third punch-bowl was emptied, that some of the farmer's scepticism on the subject was affected, as evincing a liberality of thinking and a freedom from ancient prejudices becoming a man who paid three hundred pounds a-year of rent, while, in fact, he had a lurking belief in the traditions of his forefathers. After my usual manner I made farther inquiries of other persons connected with the wild and pastoral district in which the scene of the following narrative is placed, and I was fortunate enough to recover many links of the story, not generally known, and which account, at least in some degree, for the circumstances of exaggerated marvel with which superstition has attired it in the more vulgar traditions.

[1] See Note 2.

CHAPTER II

Will none but Hearne the Hunter serve your turn?

Merry Wives of Windsor.

IN one of the most remote districts of the south of Scotland, where an ideal line, drawn along the tops of lofty and bleak mountains, separates that land from her sister kingdom, a young man called Halbert or Hobbie Elliot, a substantial farmer, who boasted his descent from old Martin Elliot of the Preakin Tower, noted in Border story and song, was on his return from deer-stalking. The deer, once so numerous among these solitary wastes, were now reduced to a very few herds, which, sheltering themselves in the most remote and inaccessible recesses, rendered the task of pursuing them equally toilsome and precarious. There were, however, found many youth of the country ardently attached to this sport, with all its dangers and fatigues. The sword had been sheathed upon the Borders for more than a hundred years by the peaceful Union of the Crowns in the reign of James the First of Great Britain. Still the country retained traces of what it had been in former days: the inhabitants, their more peaceful avocations having been repeatedly interrupted by the civil wars of the preceding century, were scarce yet broken in to the habits of regular industry, sheep-farming had not been introduced upon any considerable scale, and the feeding of black cattle was the chief purpose to which the hills and valleys were applied. Near to the farmer's house the tenant usually contrived to raise such a crop of oats or barley as afforded meal for his family; and the whole of this slovenly and imperfect mode of cultivation left much time upon his own hands and those of his domestics. This was usually employed by the young men in hunting and fishing; and the spirit of adventure, which formerly led to raids and forays in the same districts, was still to be discovered in the eagerness with which they pursued those rural sports.

The more high-spirited among the youth were, about the time that our narrative begins, expecting, rather with hope than apprehension, an opportunity of emulating their fathers in their military achievements, the recital of which formed the chief part of their amusement within doors. The passing of the Scottish Act of Security had given the alarm to England, as it seemed to point at a separation of the two British kingdoms after the decease of Queen Anne, the reigning sovereign. Godolphin, then at the head of the English administration, foresaw that there was no other mode of avoiding the probable extremity of a civil war but by carrying through an incorporating union. How that treaty was managed, and how little it seemed for some time to promise the beneficial results which have since taken place to such extent, may be learned from the history of the period. It is enough for our purpose to say that all Scotland was indignant at the terms on which their legislature had surrendered their national independence. The general resentment led to the strangest leagues and to the wildest plans. The Cameronians were about to take arms for the restoration of the house of Stuart, whom they regarded, with justice, as their oppressors; and the intrigues of the period presented the strange picture of Papists, Prelatists, and Presbyterians caballing among themselves against the English government, out of a common feeling that their country had been treated with injustice. The fermentation was universal; and, as the population of Scotland had been generally trained to arms under the Act of Security, they were not indifferently prepared for war, and waited but the declaration of some of the nobility to break out into open hostility. It was at this period of public confusion that our story opens.

The cleugh or wild ravine into which Hobbie Elliot had followed the game was already far behind him, and he was considerably advanced on his return homeward, when the night began to close upon him. This would have been a circumstance of great indifference to the experienced sportsman, who could have walked blindfold over every inch of his native heaths, had it not happened near a spot which, according to the traditions of the country, was in extremely bad fame, as haunted by supernatural appearances. To tales of this kind Hobbie had from his childhood lent an attentive ear, and as no part of the country afforded such a variety of legends, so no man was more deeply read in their fearful lore than Hobbie of the Heughfoot; for so our gallant was called, to distinguish him

from a round dozen of Elliots who bore the same Christian name. It cost him no efforts, therefore, to call to memory the terrific incidents connected with the extensive waste upon which he was now entering. In fact, they presented themselves with a readiness which he felt to be somewhat dismaying.

This dreary common was called Mucklestane Moor, from a huge column of unhewn granite which raised its massy head on a knoll near the centre of the heath, perhaps to tell of the mighty dead who slept beneath, or to preserve the memory of some bloody skirmish. The real cause of its existence had, however, passed away; and tradition, which is as frequently an inventor of fiction as a preserver of truth, had supplied its place with a supplementary legend of her own, which now came full upon Hobbie's memory. The ground about the pillar was strewed, or rather encumbered, with many large fragments of stone of the same consistence with the column, which, from their appearance as they lay scattered on the waste, were popularly called the Grey Geese of Mucklestane Moor. The legend accounted for this name and appearance by the catastrophe of a noted and most formidable witch who frequented these hills in former days, causing the ewes to 'keb' and the kine to cast their calves, and performing all the feats of mischief ascribed to these evil beings. On this moor she used to hold her revels with her sister hags; and rings were still pointed out on which no grass nor heath ever grew, the turf being, as it were, calcined by the scorching hoofs of their diabolical partners.

Once upon a time this old hag is said to have crossed the moor, driving before her a flock of geese, which she proposed to sell to advantage at a neighbouring fair: for it is well known that the fiend, however liberal in imparting his powers of doing mischief, ungenerously leaves his allies under the necessity of performing the meanest rustic labours for subsistence. The day was far advanced, and her chance of obtaining a good price depended on her being first at the market. But the geese, which had hitherto preceded her in a pretty orderly manner, when they came to this wide common interspersed with marshes and pools of water, scattered in every direction, to plunge into the element in which they delighted. Incensed at the obstinacy with which they defied all her efforts to collect them, and not remembering the precise terms of the contract by which the fiend was bound to obey her commands for a certain space, the sorceress exclaimed, 'Deevil, that neither I

nor they ever stir from this spot more!' The words were hardly uttered when, by a metamorphosis as sudden as any in Ovid, the hag and her refractory flock were converted into stone, the angel whom she served, being a strict formalist, grasping eagerly at an opportunity of completing the ruin of her body and soul by a literal obedience to her orders. It is said that, when she perceived and felt the transformation which was about to take place, she exclaimed to the treacherous fiend, 'Ah, thou false thief! lang hast thou promised me a grey gown, and now I am getting ane that will last for ever.' The dimensions of the pillar and of the stones were often appealed to as a proof of the superior stature and size of old women and geese in the days of other years, by those praisers of the past who held the comfortable opinion of the gradual degeneracy of mankind.

All particulars of this legend Hobbie called to mind as he passed along the moor. He also remembered that, since the catastrophe had taken place, the scene of it had been avoided, at least after nightfall, by all human beings, as being the ordinary resort of kelpies, spunkies, and other demons, once the companions of the witch's diabolical revels, and now continuing to rendezvous upon the same spot, as if still in attendance on their transformed mistress. Hobbie's natural hardihood, however, manfully combated with these intrusive sensations of awe. He summoned to his side the brace of large greyhounds who were the companions of his sports, and who were wont, in his own phrase, to fear neither dog nor devil; he looked at the priming of his piece, and, like the clown in *Hallowe'en*, whistled up the warlike ditty of 'Jock of the Side,' as a general causes his drums be beat to inspirit the doubtful courage of his soldiers.

In this state of mind he was very glad to hear a friendly voice shout in his rear, and propose to him a partner on the road. He slackened his pace, and was quickly joined by a youth well known to him, a gentleman of some fortune in that remote country, and who had been abroad on the same errand with himself. Young Earnscliff, 'of that ilk,' had lately come of age and succeeded to a moderate fortune, a good deal dilapidated from the share his family had taken in the disturbances of the period. They were much and generally respected in the country; a reputation which this young gentleman seemed likely to sustain as he was well educated and of excellent dispositions.

'Now, Earnscliff,' exclaimed Hobbie, 'I am glad to meet your honour ony gate, and company 's blythe on a bare moor like this; it 's an unco bogilly bit. Where hae ye been sporting?'

'Up the Carla Clough, Hobbie,' answered Earnscliff, returning his greeting. 'But will our dogs keep the peace, think you?'

'Deil a fear o' mine,' said Hobbie, 'they hae scarce a leg to stand on. Odd! the deer 's fled the country, I think! I have been as far as Inger Fell foot, and deil a horn has Hobbie seen, excepting three red wud rues, that never let me within shot of them, though I gaed a mile round to get up the wind to them, an' a'. Deil o' me wad care muckle, only I wanted some venison to our auld gude-dame. The carline, she sits in the neuk yonder upbye, and cracks about the grand shooters and hunters lang syne. Odd, I think they hae killed a' the deer in the country, for my part.'

'Well, Hobbie, I have shot a fat buck and sent him to Earnscliff this morning; you shall have half of him for your grandmother.'

'Mony thanks to ye, Mr. Patrick; ye 're kend to a' the country for a kind heart. It will do the auld wife's heart gude, mair by token when she kens it comes frae you; and maist of a' gin ye 'll come up and take your share, for I reckon ye are lonesome now in the auld tower, and a' your folk at that weary Edinburgh. I wonder what they can find to do amang a wheen ranks o' stane houses wi' slate on the tap o' them, that might live on their ain bonny green hills.'

'My education and my sisters' has kept my mother much in Edinburgh for several years,' said Earnscliff, 'but I promise you I propose to make up for lost time.'

'And ye 'll rig out the auld tower a bit,' said Hobbie, 'and live hearty and neighbour-like wi' the auld family friends, as the Laird o' Earnscliff should? I can tell ye, my mother — my grandmother, I mean; but, since we lost our ain mother, we ca' her sometimes the tane and sometimes the tother — but, ony gate, she conceits hersell no that distant connected wi' you.'

'Very true, Hobbie, and I will come to the Heughfoot to dinner to-morrow with all my heart.'

'Weel, that 's kindly said! We are auld neighbours, an we were nae kin; and my gude-dame 's fain to see you; she clavers about your father that was killed lang syne.'

'Hush, hush, Hobbie, not a word about that; it 's a story better forgotten.'

'I dinna ken: if it had chanced amang our folk, we wad hae keepit it in mind mony a day till we got some mends for 't; but ye ken your ain ways best, you lairds. I have heard say that Ellieslaw's friend stickit your sire after the Laird himsell had mastered his sword.'

'Fie, fie, Hobbie; it was a foolish brawl, occasioned by wine and politics; many swords were drawn, it is impossible to say who struck the blow.'

'At ony rate, auld Ellieslaw was aiding and abetting; and I am sure if ye were sae disposed as to take amends on him, naebody could say it was wrang, for your father's blood is beneath his nails; and besides, there 's naebody else left that was concerned to take amends upon, and he 's a Prelatist and a Jacobite into the bargain. I can tell ye the country folk look for something atween ye.'

'O for shame, Hobbie!' replied the young Laird; 'you, that profess religion, to stir your friend up to break the law, and take vengeance at his own hand, and in such a bogilly bit too, where we know not what beings may be listening to us!'

'Hush, hush!' said Hobbie, drawing nearer to his companion, 'I was nae thinking o' the like o' them. But I can guess a wee bit what keeps your hand up, Mr. Patrick; we a' ken it 's no lack o' courage, but the twa grey een of a bonny lass, Miss Isabel Vere, that keeps you sae sober.'

'I assure you, Hobbie,' said his companion, rather angrily — 'I assure you, you are mistaken; and it is extremely wrong of you either to think of or to utter such an idea. I have no idea of permitting freedoms to be carried so far as to connect my name with that of any young lady.'

'Why, there now — there now!' retorted Elliot: 'did I not say it was nae want o' spunk that made ye sae mim? Weel, weel, I meant nae offence; but there 's just ae thing ye may notice frae a friend. The auld Laird of Ellieslaw has the auld riding blood far better at his heart than ye hae: troth, he kens naething about thae newfangled notions o' peace and quietness; he 's a' for the auld-warld doings o' lifting and laying on, and he has a wheen stout lads at his back too, and keeps them weel up in heart, and as fu' o' mischief as young colts. Where he gets the gear to do 't, nane can say; he lives high, and far abune his rents here; however, he pays his way. Sae, if there 's ony

outbreak in the country, he 's likely to break out wi' the first. And weel does he mind the auld quarrels between ye. I m surmising he 'll be for a touch at the auld tower at Earnscliff.'

'Well, Hobbie,' answered the young gentleman, 'if he should be so ill advised, I shall try to make the old tower good against him, as it has been made good by my betters against his betters many a day ago.'

'Very right — very right: that 's speaking like a man now,' said the stout yeoman; 'and, if sae should be that this be sae, if ye 'll just gar your servant jow out the great bell in the tower, there 's me and my twa brothers and little Davie of the Stenhouse will be wi' you, wi' a' the power we can make, in the snapping of a flint.'

'Many thanks, Hobbie,' answered Earnscliff; 'but I hope we shall have no war of so unnatural and unchristian a kind in our time.'

'Hout, sir, hout,' replied Elliot; 'it wad be but a wee bit neighbour war, and Heaven and earth would make allowances for it in this uncultivated place. It 's just the nature o' the folk and the land: we canna live quiet like London folk, we haena sae muckle to do. It 's impossible.'

'Well, Hobbie,' said the Laird, 'for one who believes so deeply as you do in supernatural appearances, I must own you take Heaven in your own hand rather audaciously, considering where we are walking.'

'What needs I care for the Mucklestane Moor ony mair than ye do yoursell, Earnscliff?' said Hobbie, something offended; 'to be sure, they do say there 's a sort o' worriecows and lang-nebbit things about the land, but what need I care for them? I hae a good conscience, and little to answer for, unless it be about a rant amang the lasses or a splore at a fair, and that 's no muckle to speak of. Though I say it mysell, I am as quiet a lad and as peaceable ——'

'And Dick Turnbull's head that you broke, and Willie of Winton whom you shot at?' said his travelling companion.

'Hout, Earnscliff, ye keep a record of a' men's misdoings. Dick's head 's healed again, and we 're to fight out the quarrel at Jeddart on the Rood day, so that 's like a thing settled in a peaceable way; and then I am friends wi' Willie again, puir chield, it was but twa or three hail-draps after a'. I wad let ony body do the like o't to me for a pint o' brandy. But Willie 's Lowland bred, poor fallow, and soon frighted for himsell. And for the worriecows, were we to meet ane on this very bit ——'

'As is not unlikely,' said young Earnscliff, 'for there stands your old witch, Hobbie.'

'I say,' continued Elliot, as if indignant at this hint — 'I say, if the auld carline hersell was to get up out o' the grund just before us here, I would think nae mair —— But, Gude preserve us, Earnscliff, what can yon be!'

CHAPTER III

Brown Dwarf, that o'er the moorland strays,
Thy name to Keeldar tell!
'The Brown Man of the Moor, that stays
Beneath the heather-bell.'

JOHN LEYDEN.

THE object which alarmed the young farmer in the middle of his valorous protestations startled for a moment even his less prejudiced companion. The moon, which had arisen during their conversation, was, in the phrase of that country, wading or struggling with clouds, and shed only a doubtful and occasional light. By one of her beams, which streamed upon the great granite column to which they now approached, they discovered a form, apparently human, but of a size much less than ordinary, which moved slowly among the large grey stones, not like a person intending to journey onward, but with the slow, irregular, flitting movement of a being who hovers around some spot of melancholy recollection, uttering also, from time to time, a sort of indistinct muttering sound. This so much resembled his idea of the motions of an apparition, that Hobbie Elliot, making a dead pause, while his hair erected itself upon his scalp, whispered to his companion, 'It's auld Ailie hersell! Shall I gie her a shot, in the name of God?'

'For Heaven's sake, no,' said his companion, holding down the weapon which he was about to raise to the aim — 'for Heaven's sake, no: it 's some poor distracted creature.'

'Ye 're distracted yoursell, for thinking of going so near to her,' said Elliot, holding his companion in his turn, as he prepared to advance. 'We 'll aye hae time to pit ower a bit prayer -an I could but mind ane - - afore she comes this length. God! she 's in nae hurry,' continued he, growing bolder from his companion's confidence, and the little notice the apparition seemed to take of them. 'She hirples like a hen on a het girdle. I redd ye, Earnscliff (this he added in a gentle

whisper), let us take a cast about, as if to draw the wind on a buck. The bog is no abune knee-deep, and better a saft road as bad company.'

Earnscliff, however, in spite of his companion's resistance and remonstrances, continued to advance on the path they had originally pursued, and soon confronted the object of their investigation.

The height of the figure, which appeared even to decrease as they approached it, seemed to be under four feet, and its form, as far as the imperfect light afforded them the means of discerning, was very nearly as broad as long, or rather of a spherical shape, which could only be occasioned by some strange personal deformity. The young sportsman hailed this extraordinary appearance twice, without receiving any answer, or attending to the pinches by which his companion endeavoured to intimate that their best course was to walk on, without giving farther disturbance to a being of such singular and preternatural exterior. To the third repeated demand of 'Who are you? What do you here at this hour of night?' a voice replied, whose shrill, uncouth, and dissonant tones made Elliot step two paces back, and startled even his companion, 'Pass on your way, and ask nought at them that ask nought at you.'

'What do you do here so far from shelter? Are you benighted on your journey? Will you follow us home ('God forbid!' ejaculated Hobbie Elliot, involuntarily), and I will give you a lodging?'

'I would sooner lodge by mysell in the deepest of the Tarras flow,' again whispered Hobbie.

'Pass on your way,' rejoined the figure, the harsh tones of his voice still more exalted by passion. 'I want not your guide, I want not your lodging; it is five years since my head has been under a human roof, and I trust it was for the last time.'

'He is mad,' said Earnscliff.

'He has a look of auld Humphrey Ettercap, the tinkler, that perished in this very moss about five years syne,' answered his superstitious companion; 'but Humphrey wasna that awfu' big in the bouk.'

'Pass on your way,' reiterated the object of their curiosity; 'the breath of your human bodies poisons the air around me, the sound of your human voices goes through my ears like sharp bodkins.'

'Lord safe us!' whispered Hobbie, 'that the dead should

bear sic fearfu' ill-will to the living! His saul maun be in a puir way, I 'm jealous.'

'Come, my friend,' said Earnscliff, 'you seem to suffer under some strong affliction; common humanity will not allow us to leave you here.'

'Common humanity!' exclaimed the being, with a scornful laugh that sounded like a shriek, 'where got ye that catch-word — that noose for woodcocks — that common disguise for man-traps — that bait which the wretched idiot who swallows will soon find covers a hook with barbs ten times sharper than those you lay for the animals which you murder for your luxury!'

'I tell you, my friend,' again replied Earnscliff, 'you are incapable of judging of your own situation; you will perish in this wilderness, and we must, in compassion, force you along with us.'

'I 'll hae neither hand nor foot in 't,' said Hobbie; 'let the ghaist take his ain way, for God's sake!'

'My blood be on my own head, if I perish here,' said the figure; and, observing Earnscliff meditating to lay hold on him, he added, 'And your blood be upon yours, if you touch but the skirt of my garments, to infect me with the taint of mortality!'

The moon shone more brightly as he spoke thus, and Earnscliff observed that he held out his right hand armed with some weapon of offence, which glittered in the cold ray like the blade of a long knife or the barrel of a pistol. It would have been madness to persevere in his attempt upon a being thus armed, and holding such desperate language, especially as it was plain he would have little aid from his companion, who had fairly left him to settle matters with the apparition as he could, and had proceeded a few paces on his way homeward. Earnscliff, therefore, turned and followed Hobbie, after looking back towards the supposed maniac, who, as if raised to frenzy by the interview, roamed wildly around the great stone, exhausting his voice in shrieks and imprecations, that thrilled wildly along the waste heath.

The two sportsmen moved on some time in silence, until they were out of hearing of these uncouth sounds, which was not ere they had gained a considerable distance from the pillar that gave name to the moor. Each made his private comments on the scene they had witnessed, until Hobbie Elliot suddenly exclaimed, 'Weel, I 'll uphand that yon ghaist, if it be a ghaist, has baith done and suffered muckle evil in the flesh, that gars him rampauge in that way after he is dead and gane.'

'It seems to me the very madness of misanthropy,' said Earnscliff, following his own current of thought.

'And ye didna think it was a spiritual creature, then?' asked Hobbie at his companion.

'Who, I? No, surely.'

'Weel, I am partly of the mind mysell that it may be a live thing; and yet I dinna ken, I wadna wish to see ony thing look liker a bogle.'

'At any rate,' said Earnscliff, 'I will ride over to-morrow, and see what has become of the unhappy being.'

'In fair daylight?' queried the yeoman; 'then, grace o' God, I'se be wi' ye. But here we are nearer to Heughfoot than to your house by twa mile; hadna ye better e'en gae hame wi' me, and we'll send the callant on the powny to tell them that you are wi' us, though I believe there's naebody at hame to wait for you but the servants and the cat.'

'Have with you then, friend Hobbie,' said the young hunter; 'and, as I would not willingly have either the servants be anxious or puss forfeit her supper in my absence, I'll be obliged to you to send the boy as you propose.'

'Aweel, that *is* kind, I must say. And ye'll gae hame to Heughfoot? They'll be right blythe to see you, that will they.'

This affair settled, they walked briskly on a little farther, when, coming to the ridge of a pretty steep hill, Hobbie Elliot exclaimed, 'Now, Earnscliff, I am aye glad when I come to this very bit. Ye see the light below? that's in the ha' window, where grannie, the gash auld carline, is sitting birling at her wheel. And ye see yon other light that's gaun whiddin' back and forrit through amang the windows? that's my cousin, Grace Armstrong. She's twice as clever about the house as my sisters, and sae they say themsells, for they're good-natured lasses as ever trode on heather; but they confess themsells, and sae does grannie, that she has far maist action, and is the best goer about the toun, now that grannie is off the foot hersell. My brothers, ane o' them's away to wait upon the chamberlain, and ane's at Moss Phadraig, that's our led farm: he can see after the stock just as weel as I can do.'

'You are lucky, my good friend, in having so many valuable relations.'

'Troth am I. Grace mak me thankful, I'se never deny it. But will ye tell me now, Earnscliff, you that have been at college and the High School of Edinburgh, and got a' sort o' lair where it was to be best gotten — will ye tell me, no that it's ony

concern of mine in particular; but I heard the priest of St. John's and our minister bargaining about it at the Winter Fair, and troth they baith spak very weel. Now, the priest says it 's unlawful to marry ane's cousin; but I cannot say I thought he brought out the Gospel authorities half sae weel as our minister; our minister is thought the best divine and the best preacher atween this and Edinburgh. Dinna ye think he was likely to be right?'

'Certainly marriage, by all Protestant Christians, is held to be as free as God made it by the Levitical law; so, Hobbie, there can be no bar, legal or religious, betwixt you and Miss Armstrong.'

'Hout awa' wi' your joking, Earnscliff,' replied his companion; 'ye are angry eneugh yoursell if ane touches you a bit, man, on the sooth side of the jest. No that I was asking the question about Grace, for ye maun ken she 's no my cousin-germain out and out, but the daughter of my uncle's wife by her first marriage; so she 's nae kith nor kin to me, only a connexion like. But now we 're at the sheeling hill. I 'll fire off my gun to let them ken I 'm coming, that 's aye my way; and if I hae a deer I gie them twa shots, ane for the deer and ane for mysell.'

He fired off his piece accordingly, and the number of lights were seen to traverse the house, and even to gleam before it. Hobbie Elliot pointed out one of these to Earnscliff, which seemed to glide from the house towards some of the out-houses. 'That 's Grace hersell,' said Hobbie. 'She 'll no meet me at the door, I'se warrant her; but she 'll be awa', for a' that, to see if my hounds' supper be ready, poor beasts.'

'Love me, love my dog,' answered Earnscliff. 'Ah, Hobbie, you are a lucky young fellow!'

This observation was uttered with something like a sigh, which apparently did not escape the ear of his companion.

'Hout, other folk may be as lucky as I am. O how I have seen Miss Isabel Vere's head turn after somebody when they passed ane another at the Carlisle races! Wha kens but things may come round in this world?'

Earnscliff muttered something like an answer; but whether in assent to the proposition or rebuking the application of it could not easily be discovered; and it seems probable that the speaker himself was willing his meaning should rest in doubt and obscurity. They had now descended the broad loaning, which, winding round the foot of the steep bank or heugh,

brought them in front of the thatched but comfortable farm-house which was the dwelling of Hobbie Elliot and his family.

The doorway was thronged with joyful faces; but the appearance of a stranger blunted many a gibe which had been prepared on Hobbie's lack of success in the deer-stalking. There was a little bustle among three handsome young women, each endeavouring to devolve upon another the task of ushering the stranger into the apartment, while probably all were anxious to escape for the purpose of making some little personal arrangements, before presenting themselves to a young gentleman in a dishabille only intended for their brother.

Hobbie, in the meanwhile, bestowing some hearty and general abuse upon them all (for Grace was not of the party), snatched the candle from the hand of one of the rustic coquettes as she stood playing pretty with it in her hand, and ushered his guest into the family parlour, or rather hall; for the place having been a house of defence in former times, the sitting apartment was a vaulted and paved room, damp and dismal enough compared with the lodgings of the yeomanry of our days, but which, when well lighted up with a large sparkling fire of turf and bog-wood, seemed to Earnscliff a most comfortable exchange for the darkness and bleak blast of the hill. Kindly and repeatedly was he welcomed by the venerable old dame, the mistress of the family, who, dressed in her coif and pinners, her close and decent gown of homespun wool, but with a large gold necklace and ear-rings, looked what she really was, the lady as well as the farmer's wife, while, seated in her chair of wicker by the corner of the great chimney, she directed the evening occupations of the young women, and of two or three stout serving wenches, who sate plying their distaffs behind the backs of their young mistresses.

As soon as Earnscliff had been duly welcomed, and hasty orders issued for some addition to the evening meal, his grand dame and sisters opened their battery upon Hobbie Elliot for his lack of success against the deer.

'Jenny needna have kept up her kitchen fire for a' that Hobbie has brought hame,' said one sister.

'Troth no, lass,' said another; 'the gathering peat, if it was weel blawn, wad dress a' our Hobbie's venison.'

'Ay, or the low of the candle, if the wind wad let it bide steady,' said a third. 'If I were him I would bring hame a black craw rather than come back three times without a buck's horn to blaw on.'

Hobbie turned from the one to the other, regarding them alternately with a frown on his brow, the augury of which was confuted by the good humoured laugh on the lower part of his countenance. He then strove to propitiate them by mentioning the intended present of his companion.

'In my young days,' said the old lady, 'a man wad hae been ashamed to come back frae the hill without a buck hanging on each side o' his horse, like a cadger carrying calves.'

'I wish they had left some for us then, grannie,' retorted Hobbie; 'they 've cleared the country o' them, thae auld friends o' yours, I 'm thinking.'

'Ye see other folk can find game though you cannot, Hobbie,' said the eldest sister, glancing a look at young Earnscliff.

'Weel, weel, woman, hasna every dog his day? begging Earnscliff's pardon for the auld saying. Mayna I hae his luck and he mine another time? It 's a braw thing for a man to be out a' day, and frighted — na, I winna say that neither — but mistrysted wi' bogles in the hame-coming, an' then to hae to flyte wi' a wheen women that hae been doing naething a' the livelang day but whirling a bit stick wi' a thread trailing at it, or boring at a clout.'

'Frighted wi' bogles!' exclaimed the females, one and all; for great was the regard then paid, and perhaps still paid, in these glens to all such fantasies.

'I did not say frighted, now; I only said mis-set wi' the thing. And there was but ae bogle, neither. Earnscliff, ye saw it as weel as I did?'

And he proceeded, without very much exaggeration, to detail in his own way the meeting they had with the mysterious being at Mucklestane Moor, concluding, 'he could not conjecture what on earth it could be, unless it was either the Enemy himsell or some of the auld Peghts that held the country lang syne.'

'Auld Peght!' exclaimed the grand-dame; 'na, na. Bless thee frae scathe, my bairn, it 's been nae Peght that; it 's been the Brown Man of the Moors! O weary fa' thae evil days! what can evil beings be coming for to distract a poor country, now it 's peacefully settled and living in love and law? O weary on him! he ne'er brought gude to these lands or the indwellers. My father aften tauld me he was seen in the year o' the bloody fight at Marston Moor, and then again in Montrose's troubles, and again before the rout o' Dunbar; and, in my ain time, he was seen about the time o' Bothwell Brig; and they said

the second-sighted Laird of Benarbuck had a communing wi' him some time afore Argyle's landing, but that I cannot speak to sae preceesely, it was far in the west. O, bairns, he 's never permitted but in an ill time, sae mind ilka ane o' ye to draw to Him that can help in the day of trouble.'

Earnscliff now interposed, and expressed his firm conviction that the person they had seen was some poor maniac, and had no commission from the invisible world to announce either war or evil. But his opinion found a very cold audience, and all joined to deprecate his purpose of returning to the spot the next day.

'O, my bonny bairn,' said the old dame, for, in the kindness of her heart, she extended her parental style to all in whom she was interested, 'you should beware mair than other folk. There 's been a heavy breach made in your house wi' your father's bloodshed, and wi' law pleas and losses sinsyne; and you are the flower of the flock, and the lad that will build up the auld bigging again — if it be His will — to be an honour to the country and a safeguard to those that dwell in it. You, before others, are called upon to put yoursell in no rash adventures; for yours was aye ower-venturesome a race, and muckle harm they have got by it.'

'But I am sure, my good friend,' said Earnscliff, 'you would not have me be afraid of going to an open moor in broad daylight?'

'I dinna ken,' said the good old dame; 'I wad never bid son or friend o' mine haud their hand back in a gude cause, whether it were a friend's or their ain; that should be by nae bidding of mine, or of ony body that 's come of a gentle kindred. But it winna gang out of a grey head like mine that to gang to seek for evil that 's no fashing wi' you is clean against law and Scripture.'

Earnscliff resigned an argument which he saw no prospect of maintaining with good effect, and the entrance of supper broke off the conversation. Miss Grace had by this time made her appearance, and Hobbie, not without a conscious glance at Earnscliff, placed himself by her side. Mirth and lively conversation, in which the old lady of the house took the good-humoured share which so well becomes old age, restored to the cheeks of the damsels the roses which their brother's tale of the apparition had chased away, and they danced and sung for an hour after supper as if there were no such things as goblins in the world.

CHAPTER IV

I am Misanthropos, and hate mankind;
For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,
That I might love thee something.

Timon of Athens.

ON the following morning, after breakfast, Earnscliff took leave of his hospitable friends, promising to return in time to partake of the venison, which had arrived from his house. Hobbie, who apparently took leave of him at the door of his habitation, slunk out, however, and joined him at the top of the hill.

'Ye 'll be gaun yonder, Mr. Patrick; fient o' me will mistryst you for a' my mother says. I thought it best to slip out quietly though, in case she should mislippen something of what we 're gaun to do; we maunna vex her at nae rate, it was amaist the last word my father said to me on his death-bed.'

'By no means, Hobbie,' said Earnscliff; 'she well merits all your attention.'

'Troth, for that matter, she would be as sair vexed amaist for you as for me. But d'ye really think there 's nae presumption in venturing back yonder? We hae nae special commission, ye ken.'

'If I thought as y[illegible]lo, Hobbie,' said the young gentleman, 'I would not perhaps inquire farther into this business; but, as I am of opinion that preternatural visitations are either ceased altogether or become very rare in our days, I am unwilling to leave a matter uninvestigated which may concern the life of a poor distracted being.'

'Aweel, aweel, if ye really think that,' answered Hobbie, doubtfully. 'And it 's for certain the very fairies — I mean the very good neighbours themsells, for they say folk suldna ca' them fairies — that used to be seen on every green knowe at e'en, are no half sae often visible in our days. I canna depone

to having ever seen ane mysell, but I ance heard ane whistle ahint me in the moss, as like a whaup as ae thing could be like anither. And mony ane my father saw when he used to come hame frae the fairs at e'en, wi' a drap drink in his head, honest man.'

Earnscliff was somewhat entertained with the gradual declension of superstition from one generation to another which was inferred in this last observation; and they continued to reason on such subjects until they came in sight of the upright stone which gave name to the moor.

'As I shall answer,' says Hobbie, 'yonder's the creature creeping about yet! But it's daylight, and you have your gun, and I brought out my bit whinger; I think we may venture on him.'

'By all manner of means,' said Earnscliff; 'but, in the name of wonder, what can he be doing there?'

'Biggin a dry-stane dike, I think, wi' the grey geese, as they ca' thae great loose stanes. Odd, that passes a' thing I e'er heard tell of!'

As they approached nearer, Earnscliff could not help agreeing with his companion. The figure they had seen the night before seemed slowly and toilsomely labouring to pile the large stones one upon another, as if to form a small inclosure. Materials lay around him in great plenty, but the labour of carrying on the work was immense, from the size of most of the stones; and it seemed astonishing that he should have succeeded in moving several which he had already arranged for the foundation of his edifice. He was struggling to move a fragment of great size when the two young men came up, and was so intent upon executing his purpose that he did not perceive them till they were close upon him. In straining and heaving at the stone, in order to place it according to his wish, he displayed a degree of strength which seemed utterly inconsistent with his size and apparent deformity. Indeed, to judge from the difficulties he had already surmounted, he must have been of Herculean powers; for some of the stones he had succeeded in raising apparently required two men's strength to have moved them. Hobbie's suspicions began to revive on seeing the preternatural strength he exerted.

'I am amaist persuaded it 's the ghaist of a stane-mason; see siccan band-stanes as he 's laid! An it be a man after a', I wonder what he wad take by the rood to build a march dike. There 's ane sair wanted between Cringlehope and the Shaws.

Honest man (raising his voice), ye make good firm wark there?'

The being whom he addressed raised his eyes with a ghastly stare, and, getting up from his stooping posture, stood before them in all his native and hideous deformity. His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled with age; his eyebrows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small, dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets, that rolled with a portentous wildness, indicative of a partial insanity. The rest of his features were of the coarse, rough-hewn stamp with which a painter would equip a giant in romance; to which was added the wild, irregular, and peculiar expression so often seen in the countenances of those whose persons are deformed. His body, thick and square, like that of a man of middle size, was mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and, where uncovered in the eagerness of his labour, were shagged with coarse black hair. It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterwards capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf, so ill did the length of his arms and the iron strength of his frame correspond with the shortness of his stature. His clothing was a sort of coarse brown tunic, like a monk's frock, girt round him with a belt of sealskin. On his head he had a cap made of badger's skin or some other rough fur, which added considerably to the grotesque effect of his whole appearance, and overshadowed features whose habitual expression seemed that of sullen malignant misanthropy.

This remarkable dwarf gazed on the two youths in silence, with a dogged and irritated look, until Earnscliff, willing to soothe him into better temper, observed, 'You are hard tasked, my friend; allow us to assist you.'

Elliot and he accordingly placed the stone, by their joint efforts, upon the rising wall. The Dwarf watched them with the eye of a taskmaster, and testified by peevish gestures his impatience at the time which they took in adjusting the stone. He pointed to another, they raised it also; to a third, to a fourth. They continued to humour him, though with some trouble, for he assigned them, as if intentionally, the heaviest fragments which lay near.

'And now, friend,' said Elliot, as the unreasonable Dwarf indicated another stone larger than any they had moved, 'Earnscliff may do as he likes; but be ye man or be ye waur, deil be in my fingers if I break my back wi' heaving thae stanes ony langer like a barrow-man, without getting sae muckle as thanks for my pains.'

'Thanks!' exclaimed the Dwarf, with a motion expressive of the utmost contempt. 'There, take them and fatten upon them! Take them, and may they thrive with you as they have done with me, as they have done with every mortal worm that ever heard the word spoken by his fellow reptile! Hence; either labour or begone!'

'This is a fine reward we have, Earnscliff, for building a tabernacle for the devil, and prejudicing our ain souls into the bargain, for what we ken.'

'Our presence,' answered Earnscliff, 'seems only to irritate his frenzy; we had better leave him and send some one to provide him with food and necessaries.'

They did so. The servant despatched for this purpose found the Dwarf still labouring at his wall, but could not extract a word from him. The lad, infected with the superstitions of the country, did not long persist in an attempt to intrude questions or advice on so singular a figure, but, having placed the articles which he had brought for his use on a stone at some distance, he left them at the misanthrope's disposal.

The Dwarf proceeded in his labours day after day with an assiduity so incredible as to appear almost supernatural. In one day he often seemed to have done the work of two men, and his building soon assumed the appearance of the walls of a hut, which, though very small, and constructed only of stones and turf, without any mortar, exhibited, from the unusual size of the stones employed, an appearance of solidity very uncommon for a cottage of such narrow dimensions and rude construction. Earnscliff, attentive to his motions, no sooner perceived to what they tended than he sent down a number of spars of wood suitable for forming the roof, which he caused to be left in the neighbourhood of the spot, resolving next day to send workmen to put them up. But his purpose was anticipated, for in the evening, during the night, and early in the morning the Dwarf had laboured so hard, and with such ingenuity, that he had nearly completed the adjustment of the rafters. His next labour was to cut rushes and thatch his dwelling, a task which he performed with singular dexterity.

As he seemed averse to receive any aid beyond the occasional assistance of a passenger, materials suitable to his purpose and tools were supplied to him, in the use of which he proved to be skilful. He constructed the door and window of his cot, he adjusted a rude bedstead and a few shelves, and appeared to become somewhat soothed in his temper as his accommodations increased.

His next task was to form a strong inclosure and to cultivate the land within it to the best of his power; until, by transporting mould and working up what was upon the spot, he formed a patch of garden-ground. It must be naturally supposed that, as above hinted, this solitary being received assistance occasionally from such travellers as crossed the moor by chance, as well as from several who went from curiosity to visit his works. It was, indeed, impossible to see a human creature, so unfitted, at first sight, for hard labour, toiling with such unremitting assiduity, without stopping a few minutes to aid him in his task; and, as no one of his occasional assistants was acquainted with the degree of help which the Dwarf had received from others, the celerity of his progress lost none of its marvels in their eyes. The strong and compact appearance of the cottage, formed in so very short a space, and by such a being, and the superior skill which he displayed in mechanics and in other arts, gave suspicion to the surrounding neighbours. They insisted that, if he was not a phantom — an opinion which was now abandoned, since he plainly appeared a being of blood and bone with themselves — yet he must be in close league with the invisible world, and have chosen that sequestered spot to carry on his communication with them undisturbed. They insisted, though in a different sense from the philosopher's application of the phrase, that he was never less alone than when alone; and that from the heights which commanded the moor at a distance passengers often discovered a person at work along with this dweller of the desert, who regularly disappeared as soon as they approached closer to the cottage. Such a figure was also occasionally seen sitting beside him at the door, walking with him in the moor, or assisting him in fetching water from his fountain. Earnscliff explained this phenomenon by supposing it to be the Dwarf's shadow.

'Deil a shadow has he,' replied Hobbie Elliot, who was a strenuous defender of the general opinion; 'he 's ower far in wi' the Auld Ane to have a shadow. Besides,' he argued more logically, 'wha ever heard of a shadow that cam between a body

and the sun? and this thing, be it what it will, is thinner and taller than the body himsell, and has been seen to come between him and the sun mair than anes or twice either.'

These suspicions, which, in any other part of the country, might have been attended with investigations a little inconvenient to the supposed wizard, were here only productive of respect and awe. The recluse being seemed somewhat gratified by the marks of timid veneration with which an occasional passenger approached his dwelling, the look of startled surprise with which he surveyed his person and his premises, and the hurried step with which he pressed his retreat as he passed the awful spot. The boldest only stopped to gratify their curiosity by a hasty glance at the walls of his cottage and garden, and to apologise for it by a courteous salutation, which the inmate sometimes deigned to return by a word or a nod. Earnscliff often passed that way, and seldom without inquiring after the solitary inmate, who seemed now to have arranged his establishment for life.

It was impossible to engage him in any conversation on his own personal affairs; nor was he communicative or accessible in talking on any other subject whatever, although he seemed to have considerably relented in the extreme ferocity of his misanthropy, or rather to be less frequently visited with the fits of derangement of which this irritation was a symptom. No argument could prevail upon him to accept anything beyond the simplest necessaries, although much more was offered by Earnscliff out of charity, and by his more superstitious neighbours from other motives. The benefits of these last he repaid by advice, when consulted, as at length he slowly was, on their diseases or those of their cattle. He often furnished them with medicines also, and seemed possessed, not only of such as were the produce of the country, but of foreign drugs. He gave these persons to understand that his name was Elshender the Recluse; but his popular epithet soon came to be Canny Elshie, or the Wise Wight of Mucklestane Moor. Some extended their queries beyond their bodily complaints, and requested advice upon other matters, which he delivered with an oracular shrewdness that greatly confirmed the opinion of his possessing preternatural skill. The querists usually left some offering upon a stone, at a distance from his dwelling: if it was money, or any article which it did not suit him to accept, he either threw it away or suffered it to remain where it was without making use of it. On all occasions his manners were

rude and unsocial, and his words in number just sufficient to express his meaning as briefly as possible, and he shunned all communication that went a syllable beyond the matter in hand. When winter had passed away and his garden began to afford him herbs and vegetables, he confined himself almost entirely to those articles of food. He accepted, notwithstanding, a pair of she-goats from Earnscliff, which fed on the moor and supplied him with milk.

When Earnscliff found his gift had been received, he soon afterwards paid the hermit a visit. The old man was seated on a broad flat stone near his garden door, which was the seat of science he usually occupied when disposed to receive his patients or clients. The inside of his hut and that of his garden he kept as sacred from human intrusion as the natives of Otaheite do their 'marai'; apparently he would have deemed it polluted by the step of any human being. When he shut himself up in his habitation no entreaty could prevail upon him to make himself visible, or to give audience to any one whomsoever.

Earnscliff had been fishing in a small river at some distance. He had his rod in his hand, and his basket, filled with trout, at his shoulder. He sate down upon a stone nearly opposite to the Dwarf, who, familiarised with his presence, took no farther notice of him than by elevating his huge misshapen head for the purpose of staring at him, and then again sinking it upon his bosom, as if in profound meditation. Earnscliff looked around him, and observed that the hermit had increased his accommodations by the construction of a shed for the reception of his goats.

'You labour hard, Elshie,' he said, willing to lead this singular being into conversation.

'Labour,' re-echoed the Dwarf, 'is the mildest evil of a lot so miserable as that of mankind; better to labour like me than sport like you.'

'I cannot defend the humanity of our ordinary rural sports, Elshie, and yet ——'

'And yet,' interrupted the Dwarf, 'they are better than your ordinary business: better to exercise idle and wanton cruelty on mute fishes than on your fellow-creatures. Yet why should I say so? Why should not the whole human herd butt, gore, and gorge upon each other till all are extirpated but one huge and over-fed Behemoth, and he, when he had throttled and gnawed the bones of all his fellows — he, when his prey

failed him, to be roaring whole days for lack of food, and, finally, to die inch by inch of famine; it were a consummation worthy of the race!'

'Your deeds are better, Elshie, than your words,' answered Earnscliff: 'you labour to preserve the race whom your misanthropy slanders.'

'I do; but why? Hearken. You are one on whom I look with the least loathing, and I care not if, contrary to my wont, I waste a few words in compassion to your infatuated blindness. If I cannot send disease into families and murrain among the herds, can I attain the same end so well as by prolonging the lives of those who can serve the purpose of destruction as effectually? If Alice of Bower had died in winter, would young Ruthwin have been slain for her love the last spring? Who thought of penning their cattle beneath the tower when the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was deemed to be on his deathbed? My draughts, my skill, recovered him. And, now, who dare leave his herd upon the lea without a watch, or go to bed without unchaining the sleuth-hound?'

'I own,' answered Earnscliff, 'you did little good to society by the last of these cures. But, to balance the evil, there is my friend Hobbie — honest Hobbie of the Heughfoot; your skill relieved him last winter in a fever that might have cost him his life.'

'Thus think the children of clay in their ignorance,' said the Dwarf, smiling maliciously, 'and thus they speak in their folly. Have you marked the young cub of a wild cat that has been domesticated, how sportive, how playful, how gentle! But trust him with your game, your lambs, your poultry, his inbred ferocity breaks forth; he gripes, tears, ravages, and devours.'

'Such is the animal's instinct,' answered Earnscliff; 'but what has that to do with Hobbie?'

'It is his emblem, it is his picture,' retorted the Recluse. 'He is at present tame, quiet, and domesticated, for lack of opportunity to exercise his inborn propensities; but let the trumpet of war sound, let the young bloodhound snuff blood, he will be as ferocious as the wildest of his Border ancestors that ever fired a helpless peasant's abode. Can you deny that even at present he often urges you to take bloody revenge for an injury received when you were a boy?' Earnscliff started. The Recluse appeared not to observe his surprise, and proceeded — 'The trumpet *will* blow, the young bloodhound *will*

lap blood, and I will laugh and say, "For this I have preserved thee!"' He paused, and continued – 'Such are my cures, their object, their purpose, perpetuating the mass of misery, and playing even in this desert my part in the general tragedy. Were *you* on your sick-bed I might, in compassion, send you a cup of poison.'

'I am much obliged to you, Elshie,' answered the Dwarf's visitor, shrugging his shoulders; 'I certainly shall not fail to consult you, with so comfortable a hope from your assistance.'

'Do not flatter yourself too far,' replied the Hermit, 'with the hope that I will positively yield to the frailty of pity. Why should I snatch a dupe so well fitted to endure the miseries of life as you are from the wretchedness which his own visions and the villainy of the world are preparing for him? Why should I play the compassionate Indian, and, knocking out the brains of the captive with my tomahawk, at once spoil the three days' amusement of my kindred tribe, at the very moment when the brands were lighted, the pincers heated, the cauldrons boiling, the knives sharpened, to tear, scorch, seethe, and scarify the intended victim?'

'A dreadful picture you present to me of life, Elshie; but I am not daunted by it,' returned Earnscliff. 'We are sent here, in one sense, to bear and to suffer; but, in another, to do and to enjoy. The active day has its evening of repose; even patient sufferance has its alleviations, where there is a consolatory sense of duty discharged.'

'I spurn at the slavish and bestial doctrine,' said the Dwarf, his eyes kindling with insane fury — 'I spurn at it, as worthy only of the beasts that perish; but I will waste no more words with you.'

He rose hastily; but, ere he withdrew into the hut, he added with great vehemence, 'Yet, lest you still think my apparent benefits to mankind flow from the stupid and servile source called love of our fellow-creatures, know that, were there a man who had annihilated my soul's dearest hope, who had torn my heart to mammocks, and seared my brain till it glowed like a volcano, and were that man's fortune and life in my power as completely as this frail potsherd (he snatched up an earthen cup which stood beside him), I would not dash him into atoms thus (he flung the vessel with fury against the wall). No! (he spoke more composedly, but with the utmost bitterness), I would pamper him with wealth and power to inflame his evil passions and to fulfil his evil designs; he should lack no

means of vice and villainy: he should be the centre of a whirlpool that itself should know neither rest nor peace, but boil with unceasing fury, while it wrecked every goodly ship that approached its limits; he should be an earthquake capable of shaking the very land in which he dwelt, and rendering all its inhabitants friendless, outcast, and miserable — as I am!'

The wretched being rushed into his hut as he uttered these last words, shutting the door with furious violence, and rapidly drawing two bolts, one after another, as if to exclude the intrusion of any one of that hated race who had thus lashed his soul to frenzy. Earnscliff left the moor with mingled sensations of pity and horror, pondering what strange and melancholy cause could have reduced to so miserable a state of mind a man whose language argued him to be of rank and education much superior to the vulgar. He was also surprised to see how much particular information a person who had lived in that country so short a time, and in so recluse a manner, had been able to collect respecting the dispositions and private affairs of the inhabitants.

'It is no wonder,' he said to himself, 'that, with such extent of information, such a mode of life, so uncouth a figure, and sentiments so virulently misanthropic, this unfortunate should be regarded by the vulgar as in league with the Enemy of Mankind.'

CHAPTER V

The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath
Feels, in its barrenness, some touch of spring;
And, in the April dew, or beam of May,
Its moss and lichen freshen and revive;
And thus the heart, most sear'd to human pleasure,
Melts at the tear, joys in the smile, of woman.

BEAUMONT.

AS the season advanced the weather became more genial, and the Recluse was more frequently found occupying the broad flat stone in the front of his mansion. As he sate there one day, about the hour of noon, a party of gentlemen and ladies, well mounted and numerously attended, swept across the heath at some distance from his dwelling. Dogs, hawks, and led-horses swelled the retinue, and the air resounded at intervals with the cheer of the hunters and the sound of horns blown by the attendants. The Recluse was about to retire into his mansion at the sight of a train so joyous, when three young ladies, with their attendants, who had made a circuit and detached themselves from their party in order to gratify their curiosity by a sight of the Wise Wight of Mucklestane Moor, came suddenly up ere he could effect his purpose. The first shrieked and put her hands before her eyes at sight of an object so unusually deformed. The second, with a hysterical giggle, which she intended should disguise her terrors, asked the Recluse whether he could tell their fortune. The third, who was best mounted, best dressed, and incomparably the best-looking of the three, advanced, as if to cover the incivility of her companions.

'We have lost the right path that leads through these morasses, and our party have gone forward without us,' said the young lady. 'Seeing you, father, at the door of your house, we have turned this way to ——'

'Hush!' interrupted the Dwarf; 'so young and already so artful! You came — you know you came, to exult in the consciousness of your own youth, wealth, and beauty, by con-

trasting them with age, poverty, and deformity. It is a fit employment for the daughter of your father; but O how unlike the child of your mother!'

'Did you, then, know my parents, and do you know me?'

'Yes; this is the first time you have crossed my waking eyes, but I have seen you in my dreams.'

'Your dreams?'

'Ay, Isabel Vere. What hast thou or thine to do with my waking thoughts?'

'Your waking thoughts, sir,' said the second of Miss Vere's companions, with a sort of mock gravity, 'are fixed, doubtless, upon wisdom; folly can only intrude on your sleeping moments.'

'Over thine,' retorted the Dwarf, more splenetically than became a philosopher or hermit, 'folly exercises an unlimited empire, asleep or awake.'

'Lord bless us!' said the lady, 'he 's a prophet, sure enough.'

'As surely,' continued the Recluse, 'as thou art a woman. A woman! I should have said a lady — a fine lady. You asked me to tell your fortune: it is a simple one — an endless chase through life after follies not worth catching, and, when caught, successively thrown away — a chase pursued from the days of tottering infancy to those of old age upon his crutches. Toys and merry-makings in childhood, love and its absurdities in youth, spadille and basto in age, shall succeed each other as objects of pursuit — flowers and butterflies in spring, butterflies and thistle-down in summer, withered leaves in autumn and winter — all pursued, all caught, all flung aside. Stand apart; your fortune is said.'

'All *caught*, however,' retorted the laughing fair one, who was a cousin of Miss Vere's; 'that 's something, Nancy,' she continued, turning to the timid damsel who had first approached the Dwarf. 'Will you ask your fortune?'

'Not for worlds,' said she, drawing back; 'I have heard enough of yours.'

'Well, then,' said Miss Ilderton, offering money to the Dwarf, 'I 'll pay for mine, as if it were spoken by an oracle to a princess.'

'Truth,' said the Soothsayer, 'can neither be bought nor sold'; and he pushed back her proffered offering with morose disdain.

'Well, then,' said the lady, 'I 'll keep my money, Mr. Elshender, to assist me in the chase I am to pursue.'

'You will need it,' replied the cynic; 'without it, few pursue successfully, and fewer are themselves pursued. Stop!' he

said to Miss Vere, as her companions moved off, 'with you I have more to say. You have what your companions would wish to have, or be thought to have — beauty, wealth, station, accomplishments.'

'Forgive my following my companions, father,' said the young lady, no way desirous of a *tête-à-tête*; 'I am proof both to flattery and fortune-telling.'

'Stay,' continued the Dwarf, with his hand on her horse's rein, 'I am no common soothsayer and I am no flatterer. All the advantages I have detailed, all and each of them have their corresponding evils — unsuccessful love, crossed affections, the gloom of a convent, or an odious alliance. I, who wish ill to all mankind, cannot wish more evil to you, so much is your course of life crossed by it.'

'And if it be, father,' answered Miss Vere, gently, 'let me enjoy the readiest solace of adversity while prosperity is in my power. You are old; you are poor; your habitation is far from human aid, were you ill or in want; your situation in many respects exposes you to the suspicions of the vulgar, which are too apt to break out into actions of brutality. Let me think I have mended the lot of one human being! Accept of such assistance as I have power to offer; do this for my sake, if not for your own. that, when these evils arise which you prophesy perhaps too truly, I may not have to reflect that the hours of my happier time have been passed altogether in vain.'

The old man answered with a broken voice, and almost without addressing himself to the young lady: 'Yes, 't is thus thou shouldst think, 't is thus thou shouldst speak, if ever human speech and thought kept touch with each other! They do not — they do not. Alas! they cannot. And yet — wait here an instant, stir not till my return.' He went to his little garden, and returned with a half-blown rose. 'Thou hast made me shed a tear, the first which has wet my eyelids for many a year; for that good deed receive this token of gratitude. It is but a common rose; preserve it, however, and do not part with it. Come to me in your hour of adversity. Show me that rose, or but one leaf of it, were it withered as my heart is; if I should see the token even in my fiercest and wildest movements of rage against a hateful world, still it will recall gentler thoughts to my bosom, and perhaps afford happier prospects to thine. But no message,' he exclaimed, rising into his usual mood of misanthropy — 'no message — no go-between! Come thyself;

and the heart and the doors that are shut against every other earthly being shall open to thee and to thy sorrows. And now pass on.'

He let go the bridle-rein, and the young lady rode on, after expressing her thanks to this singular being as well as her surprise at the extraordinary nature of his address would permit, often turning back to look at the Dwarf, who still remained at the door of his habitation, and watched her progress over the moor towards her father's castle of Ellieslaw, until the brow of the hill hid the party from his sight.

The ladies, meantime, jested with Miss Vere on the strange interview they had just had with the far-famed Wizard of the Moor. 'Isabella has all the luck at home and abroad! Her hawk strikes down the blackcock; her eyes wound the gallant; no chance for her poor companions and kinswomen; even the conjuror cannot escape the force of her charms. You should, in compassion, cease to be such an engrosser, my dear Isabel, or at least set up shop and sell off all the goods you do not mean to keep for your own use.'

'You shall have them all,' replied Miss Vere, 'and the conjuror to boot, at a very easy rate.'

'No! Nancy shall have the conjuror,' said Miss Ilderton, 'to supply deficiencies; she 's not quite a witch herself, you know.'

'Lord, sister,' answered the younger Miss Ilderton, 'what could I do with so frightful a monster? I kept my eyes shut after once glancing at him; and I protest I thought I saw him still, though I winked as close as ever I could.'

'That 's a pity,' said her sister; 'ever while you live, Nancy, choose an admirer whose faults can be hid by winking at them. Well, then, I must take him myself, I suppose, and put him into mamma's Japan cabinet, in order to show that Scotland can produce a specimen of mortal clay moulded into a form ten thousand times uglier than the imaginations of Canton and Pekin, fertile as they are in monsters, have immortalised in porcelain.'

'There is something,' said Miss Vere, 'so melancholy in the situation of this poor man that I cannot enter into your mirth, Lucy, so readily as usual. If he has no resources, how is he to exist in this waste country, living, as he does, at such a distance from mankind? and if he has the means of securing occasional assistance, will not the very suspicion that he is possessed of them expose him to plunder and assassination by some of our unsettled neighbours?'

'But you forget that they say he is a warlock,' said Nancy Ilderton.

'And, if his magic diabolical should fail him,' rejoined her sister, 'I would have him trust to his magic natural, and thrust his enormous head and most preternatural visage out at his door or window, full in view of the assailants. The boldest robber that ever rode would hardly bide a second glance of him. Well, I wish I had the use of that Gorgon head of his for only one half-hour.'

'For what purpose, Lucy?' said Miss Vere.

'O! I would frighten out of the castle that dark, stiff, and stately Sir Frederick Langley, that is so great a favourite with your father, and so little a favourite of yours. I protest I shall be obliged to the Wizard as long as I live, if it were only for the half-hour's relief from that man's company which we have gained by deviating from the party to visit Elshie.'

'What would you say, then,' said Miss Vere, in a low tone, so as not to be heard by the younger sister, who rode before them, the narrow path not admitting of their moving all three abreast — 'what would you say, my dearest Lucy, if it were proposed to you to endure his company for life?'

'Say? I would say, "No, no, no," three times, each louder than another, till they should hear me at Carlisle.'

'And Sir Frederick would say then, "Nineteen nay-says are half a grant."'

'That,' replied Miss Lucy, 'depends entirely on the manner in which the nay-says are said. Mine should have not one grain of concession in them, I promise you.'

'But if your father,' said Miss Vere, 'were to say, "Thus do, or ——"'

'I would stand to the consequences of his "or," were he the most cruel father that ever was recorded in romance, to fill up the alternative.'

'And what if he threatened you with a Catholic aunt, an abbess, and a cloister?'

'Then,' said Miss Ilderton, 'I would threaten him with a Protestant son-in-law, and be glad of an opportunity to disobey him for conscience sake. And now that Nancy is out of hearing, let me really say, I think you would be excusable before God and man for resisting this preposterous match by every means in your power. A proud, dark, ambitious man, a caballer against the state, infamous for his avarice and severity,

a bad son, a bad brother, unkind and ungenerous to all his relatives. Isabel, I would die rather than have him.'

'Don't let my father hear you give me such advice,' said Miss Vere, 'or adieu, my dear Lucy, to Ellieslaw Castle.'

'And adieu to Ellieslaw Castle, with all my heart,' said her friend, 'if I once saw you fairly out of it, and settled under some kinder protector than he whom nature has given you. O, if my poor father had been in his former health, how gladly would he have received and sheltered you till this ridiculous and cruel persecution were blown over!'

'Would to God it had been so, my dear Lucy!' answered Isabella; 'but I fear that, in your father's weak state of health, he would be altogether unable to protect me against the means which would be immediately used for reclaiming the poor fugitive.'

'I fear so indeed,' replied Miss Ilderton; 'but we will consider and devise something. Now that your father and his guests seem so deeply engaged in some mysterious plot, to judge from the passing and returning of messages, from the strange faces which appear and disappear without being announced by their names, from the collecting and cleaning of arms, and the anxious gloom and bustle which seem to agitate every male in the castle, it may not be impossible for us — always in case matters be driven to extremity — to shape out some little supplemental conspiracy of our own. I hope the gentlemen have not kept all the policy to themselves; and there is one associate that I would gladly admit to our counsel.'

'Not Nancy?'

'O no!' said Miss Ilderton. 'Nancy, though an excellent good girl, and fondly attached to you, would make a dull conspirator — as dull as Renault and all the other subordinate plotters in *Venice Preserved*. No; this is a Jaffier, or Pierre, if you like the character better; and yet, though I know I shall please you, I am afraid to mention his name to you, lest I vex you at the same time. Can you not guess? Something about an eagle and a rock; it does not begin with eagle in English, but something very like it in Scotch.'

'You cannot mean young Earnscliff, Lucy?' said Miss Vere, blushing deeply.

'And whom else should I mean?' said Lucy. 'Jaffiers and Pierres are very scarce in this country, I take it, though one could find Renaults and Bedamars enow.'

'How can you talk so wildly, Lucy? Your plays and

romances have positively turned your brain. You know that, independent of my father's consent, without which I never will marry any one, and which, in the case you point at, would never be granted; independent, too, of our knowing nothing of young Earnscliff's inclinations, but by your own wild conjectures and fancies — besides all this, there is the fatal brawl!'

'When his father was killed?' said Lucy. 'But that was very long ago; and I hope we have outlived the time of bloody feud, when a quarrel was carried down between two families from father to son, like a Spanish game at chess, and a murder or two, like the taking of a piece, committed in every generation, just to keep the matter from going to sleep. We do with our quarrels nowadays as with our clothes — cut them out for ourselves, and wear them out in our own day, and should no more think of resenting our fathers' feuds than of wearing their slashed doublets and trunk hose.'

'You treat this far too lightly, Lucy,' answered Miss Vere.

'Not a bit, my dear Isabella,' said Lucy. 'Consider, your father, though present in the unhappy affray, is never supposed to have struck the fatal blow; besides, in former times, in case of mutual slaughter between clans, subsequent alliances were so far from being excluded, that the hand of a daughter or a sister was the most frequent gage of reconciliation. You laugh at my skill in romance; but, I assure you, should your history be written, like that of many a less distressed and less deserving heroine, the well-judging reader will set you down for the lady and the love of Earnscliff from the very obstacle which you suppose so insurmountable.'

'But these are not the days of romance but of sad reality, for there stands the castle of Ellieslaw.'

'And there stands Sir Frederick Langley at the gate, waiting to assist the ladies from their palfreys. I would as lief touch a toad; I will disappoint him and take old Horsington the groom for my master of the horse.'

So saying, the lively young lady switched her palfrey forward, and, passing Sir Frederick with a familiar nod as he stood ready to take her horse's rein, she cantered on and jumped into the arms of the old groom. Fain would Isabella have done the same had she dared; but her father stood near, displeasure already darkening on a countenance peculiarly qualified to express the harsher passions, and she was compelled to receive the unwelcome assiduities of her detested suitor.

CHAPTER VI

Let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's booty; let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon.

Henry IV. Part I.

THE Solitary had consumed the remainder of that day in which he had the interview with the young ladies within the precincts of his garden. Evening again found him seated on his favourite stone. The sun setting red, and among seas of rolling clouds, threw a gloomy lustre over the moor, and gave a deeper purple to the broad outline of heathy mountains which surrounded this desolate spot. The Dwarf sate watching the clouds as they lowered above each other in masses of conglomerated vapours, and, as a strong lurid beam of the sinking luminary darted full on his solitary and uncouth figure, he might well have seemed the demon of the storm which was gathering, or some gnome summoned forth from the recesses of the earth by the subterranean signals of its approach. As he sate thus, with his dark eye turned towards the scowling and blackening heaven, a horseman rode rapidly up to him, and stopping, as if to let his horse breathe for an instant, made a sort of obeisance to the anchoret, with an air betwixt effrontery and embarrassment.

The figure of the rider was thin, tall, and slender, but remarkably athletic, bony, and sinewy; like one who had all his life followed those violent exercises which prevent the human form from increasing in bulk, while they harden and confirm by habit its muscular powers. His face, sharp featured, sun burnt, and freckled, had a sinister expression of violence, impudence, and cunning, each of which seemed alternately to predominate over the others. Sandy-coloured hair and reddish eyebrows, from under which looked forth his sharp grey eyes, completed the inauspicious outline of the horseman's physiognomy. He had pistols in his holsters, and another pair peeped from his belt, though he had taken some pains to conceal them

by buttoning his doublet. He wore a rusted steel head-piece, a buff jacket of rather an antique cast, gloves, of which that for the right hand was covered with small scales of iron, like an ancient gauntlet; and a long broadsword completed his equipage.

'So,' said the Dwarf, 'rapine and murder once more on horseback.'

'On horseback?' said the bandit; 'ay, ay, Elshie, your leech-craft has set me on the bonny bay again.'

'And all those promises of amendment which you made during your illness forgotten?' continued Elshender.

'All passed clear away, with the water sops and panada,' returned the unabashed convalescent. 'Ye ken, Elshie, for they say ye are weel acquent wi' the gentleman,

> When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be,
> When the devil was well, the devil a monk was he.'

'Thou say'st true,' said the Solitary; 'as well divide a wolf from his appetite for carnage, or a raven from her scent of slaughter, as thee from thy accursed propensities.'

'Why, what would you have me to do?' answered the rider. 'It's born with me, lies in my very bluid and bane. Why, man, the lads of Westburnflat for ten lang descents have been reivers and lifters. They have all drunk hard, lived high, taking deep revenge for light offence, and never wanted gear for the winning.'

'Right; and thou art as thoroughbred a wolf,' said the Dwarf, 'as ever leapt a lamb-fold at night. On what hell's errand art thou bound now?'

'Can your skill not guess?'

'Thus far I know,' said the Dwarf, 'that thy purpose is bad, thy deed will be worse, and the issue worst of all.'

'And you like me the better for it, Father Elshie, eh?' said Westburnflat; 'you always said you did.'

'I have cause to like all,' answered the Solitary, 'that are scourges to their fellow-creatures, and thou art a bloody one.'

'No, I say not guilty to that; never bluidy unless there's resistance, and that sets a man's bristles up, ye ken. And this is nae great matter, after a'; just to cut the comb of a young cock that has been crawing a little ower crousely.'

'Not young Earnscliff?' said the Solitary, with some emotion.

'No: not young Earnscliff – not young Earnscliff *yet*; but his time may come, if he will not take warning and get him back to the burrow-town that he's fit for, and no keep skelping

about here, destroying the few deer that are left in the country, and pretending to act as a magistrate, and writing letters to the great folk at Auld Reekie about the disturbed state of the land. Let him take care o' himsell.'

'Then it must be Hobbie of the Heughfoot,' said Elshie. 'What harm has the lad done you?'

'Harm! nae great harm; but I hear he says I staid away from the ba'spiel on Fastern's E'en for fear of him; and it was only for fear of the country keeper, for there was a warrant against me. I'll stand Hobbie's feud and a' his clan's. But it's not so much for that as to gie him a lesson not to let his tongue gallop ower freely about his betters. I trow he will hae lost the best pen-feather o' his wing before to-morrow morning. Farewell, Elshie; there's some canny boys waiting for me down amang the shaws owerby; I will see you as I come back, and bring ye a blythe tale in return for your leech-craft.'

Ere the Dwarf could collect himself to reply, the Reiver of Westburnflat[1] set spurs to his horse. The animal, starting at one of the stones which lay scattered about, flew from the path. The rider exercised his spurs without moderation or mercy. The horse became furious, reared, kicked, plunged, and bolted like a deer, with all his four feet off the ground at once. It was in vain: the unrelenting rider sate as if he had been a part of the horse which he bestrode; and, after a short but furious contest, compelled the subdued animal to proceed upon the path at a rate which soon carried him out of sight of the Solitary.

'That villain,' exclaimed the Dwarf—'that cool-blooded, hardened, unrelenting ruffian—that wretch, whose every thought is infected with crimes—has thewes and sinews, limbs, strength, and activity enough, to compel a nobler animal than himself to carry him to the place where he is to perpetrate his wickedness; while I, had I the weakness to wish to put his wretched victim on his guard, and to save the helpless family, would see my good intentions frustrated by the decrepitude which chains me to the spot. Why should I wish it were otherwise? What have my screech-owl voice, my hideous form, and my misshapen features to do with the fairer workmanship of nature? Do not men receive even my benefits with shrinking horror and ill-suppressed disgust? And why should I interest myself in a race which accounts me a prodigy and an

[1] See Note 3.

outcast, and which has treated me as such? No; by all the ingratitude which I have reaped, by all the wrongs which I have sustained, by my imprisonment, my stripes, my chains, I will wrestle down my feelings of rebellious humanity! I will not be the fool I have been, to swerve from my principles whenever there was an appeal, forsooth, to my feelings; as if I, towards whom none show sympathy, ought to have sympathy with any one. Let Destiny drive forth her scythed car through the overwhelmed and trembling mass of humanity! Shall I be the idiot to throw this decrepit form, this misshapen lump of mortality, under her wheels, that the Dwarf, the Wizard, the Hunchback may save from destruction some fair form or some active frame, and all the world clap their hands at the exchange? No, never! And yet this Elliot — this Hobbie, so young and gallant, so frank, so — I will think of it no longer. I will not aid him if I would, and I am resolved — firmly resolved — that I would not aid him if a wish were the pledge of his safety!'

Having thus ended his soliloquy, he retreated into his hut for shelter from the storm which was fast approaching, and now began to burst in large and heavy drops of rain. The last rays of the sun now disappeared entirely, and two or three claps of distant thunder followed each other at brief intervals, echoing and re-echoing among the range of heathy fells like the sound of a distant engagement.

CHAPTER VII

Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn

. . . . .

Return to thy dwelling, all lonely, return;
For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,
And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood.

CAMPBELL.

THE night continued sullen and stormy; but morning rose as if refreshed by the rains. Even the Mucklestane Moor, with its broad bleak swells of barren grounds, interspersed with marshy pools of water, seemed to smile under the serene influence of the sky, just as good-humour can spread a certain inexpressible charm over the plainest human countenance. The heath was in its thickest and deepest bloom. The bees, which the Solitary had added to his rural establishment, were abroad and on the wing, and filled the air with the murmurs of their industry. As the old man crept out of his little hut, his two she-goats came to meet him, and licked his hands in gratitude for the vegetables with which he supplied them from his garden. 'You, at least,' he said — 'you, at least, see no differences in form which can alter your feelings to a benefactor; to you the finest shape that ever statuary moulded would be an object of indifference or of alarm, should it present itself instead of the misshapen trunk to whose services you are accustomed. While I was in the world, did I ever meet with such a return of gratitude? No; the domestic whom I had bred from infancy made mouths at me as he stood behind my chair: the friend whom I had supported with my fortune, and for whose sake I had even stained —— (he stopped with a strong convulsive shudder). Even he thought me more fit for the society of lunatics, for their disgraceful restraints, for their cruel privations, than for communication with the rest of humanity. Hubert alone — and Hubert too will one day abandon me. All are of a piece — one mass of wickedness, selfishness, and ingratitude — wretches who

sin even in their devotions, and of such hardness of heart that they do not, without hypocrisy, even thank the Deity Himself for His warm sun and pure air.'

As he was plunged in these gloomy soliloquies, he heard the tramp of a horse on the other side of his inclosure, and a strong clear bass voice singing with the liveliness inspired by a light heart —

> Canny Hobbie Elliot, canny Hobbie now,
> Canny Hobbie Elliot, I'se gang alang wi' you.

At the same moment a large deer greyhound sprung over the hermit's fence. It is well known to the sportsmen in these wilds that the appearance and scent of the goat so much resemble those of their usual objects of chase that the best-broke greyhounds will sometimes fly upon them. The dog in question instantly pulled down and throttled one of the hermit's she-goats, while Hobbie Elliot, who came up and jumped from his horse for the purpose, was unable to extricate the harmless animal from the fangs of his attendant until it was expiring. The Dwarf eyed, for a few moments, the convulsive starts of his dying favourite, until the poor goat stretched out her limbs with the twitches and shivering fit of the last agony. He then started into an access of frenzy, and, unsheathing a long sharp knife or dagger which he wore under his coat, he was about to launch it at the dog, when Hobbie, perceiving his purpose, interposed, and caught hold of his hand, exclaiming, 'Let a be the hound, man — let a be the hound! Na, na, Killbuck maunna be guided that gate, neither.'

The Dwarf turned his rage on the young farmer; and by a sudden effort, far more powerful than Hobbie expected from such a person, freed his wrist from his grasp and offered the dagger at his heart. All this was done in the twinkling of an eye, and the incensed Recluse might have completed his vengeance by plunging the weapon in Elliot's bosom, had he not been checked by an internal impulse which made him hurl the knife to a distance.

'No,' he exclaimed, as he thus voluntarily deprived himself of the means of gratifying his rage; 'not again — not again!'

Hobbie retreated a step or two in great surprise, discomposure, and disdain at having been placed in such danger by an object apparently so contemptible.

'The deil's in the body for strength and bitterness!' were the first words that escaped him, which he followed up with an

apology for the accident that had given rise to their disagreement. 'I am no justifying Killbuck a'thegither neither, and I am sure it is as vexing to me as to you, Elshie, that the mischance should hae happened: but I 'll send you twa goats and twa fat gimmers, man, to make a' straight again. A wise man like you shouldna bear malice against a poor dumb thing; ye see that a goat 's like first-cousin to a deer, sae Killbuck acted but according to his nature after a'. Had it been a pet lamb there wad hae been mair to be said. Ye suld keep sheep, Elshie, and no goats, where there 's sae mony deer-hounds about; but I 'll send ye baith.'

'Wretch!' said the Hermit, 'your cruelty has destroyed one of the only creatures in existence that would look on me with kindness!'

'Dear Elshie,' answered Hobbie, 'I 'm wae ye suld hae cause to say sae; I 'm sure it wasna wi' my will. And yet, it 's true, I should hae minded your goats, and coupled up the dogs. I 'm sure I would rather they had worried the primest wether in my faulds. Come, man, forget and forgie. I 'm e'en as vexed as ye can be. But I am a bridegroom, ye see, and that puts a' things out o' my head, I think. There 's the marriage-dinner, or gude part o't, that my twa brithers are bringing on a sled round by the Riders' Slack — three goodly bucks as ever ran on Dallomlea, as the sang says; they couldna come the straight road for the saft grund. I wad send ye a bit venison, but ye wadna take it weel maybe, for Killbuck catched it.'

During this long speech, in which the good-natured Borderer endeavoured to propitiate the offended Dwarf by every argument he could think of, he heard him with his eyes bent on the ground, as if in the deepest meditation, and at length broke forth — 'Nature! Yes, it is indeed in the usual beaten path of Nature. The strong gripe and throttle the weak; the rich depress and despoil the needy; the happy — those who are idiots enough to think themselves happy — insult the misery and diminish the consolation of the wretched. Go hence, thou who hast contrived to give an additional pang to the most miserable of human beings — thou who hast deprived me of what I had considered as a source of comfort. Go hence, and enjoy the happiness prepared for thee at home!'

'Never stir,' said Hobbie, 'if I wadna take you wi' me, man, if ye wad but say it wad divert ye to be at the bridal on Monday. There will be a hundred strapping Elliots to ride

the brouze :[1] the like 's no been seen sin' the days of auld Martin of the Preakin Tower. I wad send the sled for ye wi' a canny powny.'

'Is it to me you propose once more to mix in the society of the common herd ?' said the Recluse, with an air of deep disgust.

'Commons !' retorted Hobbie, 'nae siccan commons neither ; the Elliots hae been lang kend a gentle race.'

'Hence ! begone !' reiterated the Dwarf ; 'may the same evil luck attend thee that thou hast left behind with me ! If I go not with you myself, see if you can escape what my attendants, Wrath and Misery, have brought to thy threshold before thee.'

'I wish ye wadna speak that gate,' said Hobbie. 'Ye ken yoursell, Elshie, naebody judges you to be ower canny. Now, I 'll tell ye just ae word for a' : ye hae spoken as muckle as wussing ill to me and mine ; now, if ony mischance happen to Grace — which God forbid — or to mysell, or to the poor dumb tyke, or if I be skaithed and injured in body, gudes, or gear, I 'll no forget wha it is that it 's owing to.'

'Out, hind !' exclaimed the Dwarf ; 'home ! home to your dwelling, and think on me when you find what has befallen there.'

'Aweel, aweel,' said Hobbie, mounting his horse, 'it serves naething to strive wi' cripples, they are aye cankered ; but I 'll just tell ye ae thing, neighbour, that if things be otherwise than weel wi' Grace Armstrong, I 'se gie you a scouther if there be a tar-barrel in the five parishes.'

So saying, he rode off ; and Elshie, after looking at him with a scornful and indignant laugh, took spade and mattock and occupied himself in digging a grave for his deceased favourite.

A low whistle, and the words, 'Hisht, Elshie, hisht !' disturbed him in this melancholy occupation. He looked up, and the Red Reiver of Westburnflat was before him. Like Banquo's murderer, there was blood on his face, as well as upon the rowels of his spurs and the sides of his over-ridden horse.

'How now, ruffian ?' demanded the Dwarf, 'is thy job chared ?'

'Ay, ay, doubt not that, Elshie,' answered the freebooter ; 'when I ride, my foes may moan. They have had mair light than comfort at the Heughfoot this morning : there 's a toom byre and a wide, and a wail and a cry for the bonny bride.'

'The bride ?'

[1] See Note 4.

'Ay; Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie, as we ca' him — that 's Charlie Foster of Tinning Beck, has promised to keep her in Cumberland till the blast blaw by. She saw me and kend me in the splore, for the mask fell frae my face for a blink. I am thinking it wad concern my safety if she were to come back here; for there 's mony o' the Elliots, and they band weel thegither for right or wrang. Now, what I chiefly come to ask your rede in, is how to make her sure?'

'Wouldst thou murder her, then?'

'Umph! no, no; that I would not do, if I could help it. But they say they can whiles get folk cannily away to the plantations from some of the out-ports, and something to boot for them that brings a bonny wench. They 're wanted beyond seas thae female cattle, and they 're no that scarce here. But I think o' doing better for this lassie. There 's a leddy that, unless she be a' the better bairn, is to be sent to foreign parts whether she will or no; now, I think of sending Grace to wait on her; she 's a bonny lassie. Hobbie will hae a merry morning when he comes hame and misses baith bride and gear.'

'Ay; and do you not pity him?' said the Recluse.

'Wad he pity me were I gaeing up the castle hill at Jeddart?[1] And yet I rue something for the bit lassie; but he 'll get a new bride, and little skaith dune. Ane is as gude as anither. And now, you that like to hear o' splores, heard ye ever o' a better ane than I hae had this morning?'

'Air, ocean, and fire,' said the Dwarf, speaking to himself, 'the earthquake, the tempest, the volcano, are all mild and moderate compared to the wrath of man. And what is this fellow but one more skilled than others in executing the end of his existence? Hear me, felon, go again where I before sent thee.'

'To the steward?'

'Ay; and tell him Elshender the Recluse commands him to give thee gold. But, hear me, let the maiden be discharged free and uninjured; return her to her friends, and let her swear not to discover thy villainy.'

'Swear!' said Westburnflat; 'but what if she break her aith? Women are not famous for keeping their plight. A wise man like you should ken that. And uninjured! Wha kens what may happen were she to be left lang at Tinning

[1] The place of execution at that ancient burgh, where many of Westburnflat's pro'ssion have made their final exit after their trial, and, if fame speaks true, some of them before it.

Beck? Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie is a rough customer. But, if the gold could be made up to twenty pieces, I think I could ensure her being wi' her friends within the twenty-four hours.'

The Dwarf took his tablets from his pocket, marked a line on them, and tore out the leaf. 'There,' he said, giving the robber the leaf. 'But, mark me — thou knowest I am not to be fooled by thy treachery — if thou darest to disobey my directions, thy wretched life, be sure, shall answer it.'

'I know,' said the fellow, looking down, 'that you have power on earth, however you came by it: you can do what nae other man can do, baith by physic and foresight; and the gold is shelled down, when ye command, as fast as I have seen the ash-keys fall in a frosty morning in October. I will not disobey you.'

'Begone, then, and relieve me of thy hateful presence.'

The robber set spurs to his horse and rode off without reply.

Hobbie Elliot had, in the meanwhile, pursued his journey rapidly, harassed by those oppressive and indistinct fears that all was not right which men usually term a presentiment of misfortune. Ere he reached the top of the bank from which he could look down on his own habitation, he was met by his nurse, a person then of great consequence in all families in Scotland, whether of the higher or middling classes. The connexion between them and their foster-children was considered a tie far too dearly intimate to be broken; and it usually happened, in the course of years, that the nurse became a resident in the family of her foster-son, assisting in the domestic duties, and receiving all marks of attention and regard from the heads of the family. So soon as Hobbie recognised the figure of Annaple, in her red cloak and black hood, he could not help exclaiming to himself, 'What ill-luck can hae brought the auld nurse sae far frae hame, her that never stirs a gunshot frae the door-stane for ordinar? Hout, it will just be to get crane-berries or whortle-berries, or some such stuff, out of the moss, to make the pies and tarts for the feast on Monday. I cannot get the words of that cankered auld cripple deil's-buckie out o' my head: the least thing makes me dread some ill news. O, Killmanock, man! were there nae deer and goats in the country beside but I behoved to gang and worry his creature by a' other folks'?'

By this time Annaple, with a brow like a tragic volume, had hobbled towards him and caught his horse by the bridle.

The despair in her look was so evident as to deprive even him of the power of asking the cause. 'O my bairn!' she cried, 'gang na forward — gang na forward; it 's a sight to kill ony body, let alane thee.'

'In God's name, what 's the matter?' said the astonished horseman, endeavouring to extricate his bridle from the grasp of the old woman; 'for Heaven's sake, let me go and see what 's the matter.'

'Ohon! that I should have lived to see the day! The steading 's a' in a low, and the bonny stackyard lying in the red ashes, and the gear a' driven away. But gang na forward; it wad break your young heart, hinny, to see what my auld een hae seen this morning.'

'And who has dared to do this? Let go my bridle, Annaple. Where is my grandmother, my sisters? Where is Grace Armstrong? God! the words of the warlock are knelling in my ears!'

He sprang from his horse to rid himself of Annaple's interruption, and, ascending the hill with great speed, soon came in view of the spectacle with which she had threatened him. It was indeed a heart-breaking sight. The habitation which he had left in its seclusion, beside the mountain-stream, surrounded with every evidence of rustic plenty, was now a wasted and blackened ruin. From amongst the shattered and sable walls the smoke continued to rise. The turf-stack, the barn-yard, the offices stocked with cattle, all the wealth of an upland cultivator of the period, of which poor Elliot possessed no common share, had been laid waste or carried off in a single night. He stood a moment motionless, and then exclaimed, 'I am ruined — ruined to the ground! But curse on the warld's gear — had it not been the week before the bridal! But I am nae babe, to sit down and greet about it. If I can but find Grace and my grandmother and my sisters weel, I can go to the wars in Flanders, as my gude-sire did, under the Bellenden banner, wi' auld Buccleuch and his black banders.[1] At ony rate, I will keep up a heart, or they will lose theirs a'thegither.'

Manfully strode Hobbie down the hill, resolved to suppress his own despair and administer consolation which he did not feel. The neighbouring inhabitants of the dell, particularly those of his own name, had already assembled. The younger part were in arms and clamorous for revenge, although they knew not upon whom; the elder were taking measures for the

[1] See Borderers in Flanders. Note 5.

relief of the distressed family. Annaple's cottage, which was situated down the brook, at some distance from the scene of mischief, had been hastily adapted for the temporary accommodation of the old lady and her daughters, with such articles as had been contributed by the neighbours, for very little was saved from the wreck.

'Are we to stand here a' day, sirs,' exclaimed one tall young man, 'and look at the burnt wa's of our kinsman's house? Every wreath of the reek is a blast of shame upon us! Let us to horse and take the chase. Who has the nearest blood-hound?'

'It 's young Earnscliff,' answered another; 'and he 's been on and away wi' six horse lang syne, to see if he can track them.'

'Let us follow him then,' said the tall youth, 'and raise the country, and mak mair help as we ride, and then have at the Cumberland reivers! Take, burn, and slay; they that lie nearest us shall smart first.'

'Whisht! haud your tongues, daft callants,' said an old man, 'ye dinna ken what ye speak about. What! wad ye raise war atween twa pacificated countries?'

'And what signifies deaving us wi' tales about our fathers,' retorted the young man, 'if we 're to sit and see our friends' houses burnt ower their heads, and no put out hand to revenge them? Our fathers did not do that, I trow?'

'I am no saying ony thing against revenging Hobbie's wrang, puir chield; but we maun take the law wi' us in thae days, Simon,' answered the more prudent elder.

'And besides,' said another old man, 'I dinna believe there 's ane now living that kens the lawful mode of following a fray across the Border. Tam o' Whittram kend a' about it; but he died in the hard winter.'

'Ay,' said a third, 'he was at the great gathering, when they chased as far as Thirlwall: it was the year after the fight of Philiphaugh.'

'Hout,' exclaimed another of these discording counsellors, 'there 's nae great skill needed: just put a lighted peat on the end of a spear or hay-fork, or sic-like, and blaw a horn, and cry the gathering-word, and then it 's lawful to follow gear into England, and recover it by the strong hand, or to take gear frae some other Englishman, providing ye lift nae mair than 's been lifted frae you. That 's the auld Border law, made at Dundrennan, in the days of the Black Douglas. Deil ane need doubt it. It 's as clear as the sun.'

'Come away, then, lads,' cried Simon, 'get to your geldings, and we 'll take auld Cuddie the muckle tasker wi' us; he kens the value o' the stock and plenishing that 's been lost. Hobbie's stalls and stakes shall be fou again or night; and if we canna big up the auld house sae soon, we'se lay an English ane as low as Heughfoot is; and that 's fair play, a' the warld ower.'

This animating proposal was received with great applause by the younger part of the assemblage, when a whisper ran among them, 'There 's Hobbie himsell, puir fallow! we 'll be guided by him.'

The principal sufferer, having now reached the bottom of the hill, pushed on through the crowd, unable, from the tumultuous state of his feelings, to do more than receive and return the grasps of the friendly hands by which his neighbours and kinsmen mutely expressed their sympathy in his misfortune. While he pressed Simon of Hackburn's hand, his anxiety at length found words. 'Thank ye, Simon — thank ye, neighbours; I ken what ye wad a' say. But where are they? Where are ——' He stopped, as if afraid even to name the objects of his inquiry; and with a similar feeling his kinsmen, without reply, pointed to the hut, into which Hobbie precipitated himself with the desperate air of one who is resolved to know the worst at once. A general and powerful expression of sympathy accompanied him. 'Ah, puir fallow, puir Hobbie!'

'He 'll learn the warst o't now!' said Simon of Hackburn.

'But I trust Earnscliff will get some speerings o' the puir lassie.'

Such were the exclamations of the group, who, having no acknowledged leader to direct their motions, passively awaited the return of the sufferer, and determined to be guided by his directions.

The meeting between Hobbie and his family was in the highest degree affecting. His sisters threw themselves upon him and almost stifled him with their caresses, as if to prevent his looking round to distinguish the absence of one yet more beloved.

'God help thee, my son! He can help when worldly trust is a broken reed.' Such was the welcome of the matron to her unfortunate grandson. He looked eagerly round, holding two of his sisters by the hand, while the third hung about his neck — 'I see you, I count you — my grandmother, Lilias, Jean, and Annot: but where is —— ' he hesitated, and then continued, as if with an effort — 'where is Grace? Surely this is not a

time to hide herself frae me; there's nae time for daffing now.'

'O, brother!' and 'Our poor Grace!' was the only answer his questions could procure, till his grandmother rose up and gently disengaged him from the weeping girls, led him to a seat, and with the affecting serenity which sincere piety, like oil sprinkled on the waves, can throw over the most acute feelings, she said, 'My bairn, when thy grandfather was killed in the wars, and left me with six orphans around me, with scarce bread to eat or a roof to cover us, I had strength — not of mine own — but I had strength given me to say, "The Lord's will be done!" My son, our peaceful house was last night broken into by moss-troopers, armed and masked; they have taken and destroyed all, and carried off our dear Grace. Pray for strength to say, "His will be done!"'

'Mother! mother! urge me not, I cannot — not now; I am a sinful man, and of a hardened race. Masked — armed — Grace carried off! Gie me my sword and my father's knapscap; I will have vengeance, if I should go to the pit of darkness to seek it!'

'O my bairn, my bairn! be patient under the rod. Who knows when He may lift His hand off from us? Young Earnscliff, Heaven bless him! has taen the chase, with Davie of Stenhouse and the first comers. I cried to let house and plenishing burn, and follow the reivers to recover Grace, and Earnscliff and his men were ower the Fell within three hours after the deed. God bless him! he's a real Earnscliff; he's his father's true son, a leal friend.'

'A true friend indeed, God bless him!' exclaimed Hobbie; 'let's on and away, and take the chase after him.'

'O, my child, before you run on danger, let me hear you but say, "His will be done!"'

'Urge me not, mother — not now.' He was rushing out, when, looking back, he observed his grandmother make a mute attitude of affliction. He returned hastily, threw himself into her arms, and said, 'Yes, mother, I *can* say, "His will be done," since it will comfort you.'

'May He go forth — may He go forth with you, my dear bairn; and O, may He give you cause to say on your return, "His name be praised"!'

'Farewell, mother! farewell, my dear sisters!' exclaimed Elliot, and rushed out of the house.

CHAPTER VIII

Now horse and hattock, cried the Laird—
Now horse and hattock, speedilie;
They that winna ride for Telfer's kye,
Let them never look in the face o' me.

Border Ballad.

'HORSE! horse! and spear!' exclaimed Hobbie to his kinsmen. Many a ready foot was in the stirrup; and, while Elliot hastily collected arms and accoutrements, no easy matter in such a confusion, the glen resounded with the approbation of his younger friends.

'Ay, ay!' exclaimed Simon of Hackburn, 'that 's the gate to take it, Hobbie. Let women sit and greet at hame, men must do as they have been done by: it 's the Scripture says 't.'

'Haud your tongue, sir,' said one of the seniors, sternly; 'dinna abuse the Word that gate, ye dinna ken what ye speak about.'

'Hae ye ony tidings? Hae ye ony speerings, Hobbie? O, callants, dinna be ower-hasty,' said old Dick of the Dingle.

'What signifies preaching to us e'enow?' said Simon; 'if ye canna make help yoursell, dinna keep back them that can.'

'Whisht, sir; wad ye take vengeance or ye ken wha has wrang'd ye?'

'D' ye think we dinna ken the road to England as weel 's our fathers before us? All evil comes out o' thereaway — it 's an auld saying and a true; and we 'll e'en away there, as if the devil was blawing us south.'

'We 'll follow the track o' Farnsleiff's horses ower the waste,' cried one Elliot.

'I 'll prick them out through the blindest moor in the Border, an there had been a fair held there the day before,' said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn, 'for I aye shoe his horse wi' my ain hand.'

'Lay on the deer-hounds,' cried another; 'where are they?'

'Hout, man, the sun 's been lang up, and the dew is aff the grund; the scent will never lie.'

Hobbie instantly whistled on his hounds, which were roving about the ruins of their old habitation and filling the air with their doleful howls.

'Now, Killbuck,' said Hobbie, 'try thy skill this day.' And then, as if a light had suddenly broke on him, 'That ill-faur'd goblin spak something o' this! He may ken mair o't, either by villains on earth or devils below: I'll hae it frae him, if I should cut it out o' his misshapen bouk wi' my whinger.' He then hastily gave directions to his comrades: 'Four o' ye, wi' Simon, haud right forward to Grime's Gap. If they 're English, they 'll be for being back that way. The rest disperse by twasome and threesome through the waste, and meet me at the Trysting Pool. Tell my brothers, when they come up, to follow and meet us there. Poor lads! they will hae hearts weel nigh as sair as mine; little think they what a sorrowful house they are bringing their venison to! I'll ride ower Mucklestane Moor my-sell.'

'And if I were you,' said Dick of the Dingle, 'I wou' l speak to Canny Elshie. He can tell you whatever betides in this land, if he 's sae minded.'

'He *shall* tell me,' said Hobbie, who was busy putting his arms in order, 'what he kens o' this night's job, or I shall right weel ken wherefore he does not.'

'Ay, but speak him fair, my bonny man,' said the adviser 'speak him fair, Hobbie: the like o' him will no bear thrawing. They converse sae muckle wi' thae fractious ghaists and evil spirits that it clean spoils their temper.'

'Let me alane to guide him,' answered Hobbie; 'there 's that in my breast this day that would ower-maister a' the warlocks on earth and a' the devils in hell.'

And, being now fully equipped, he threw himself on his horse and spurred him at a rapid pace against the steep ascent.

Elliot speedily surmounted the hill, rode down the other side at the same rate, crossed a wood, and traversed a long glen, ere he at length regained Mucklestane Moor. As he was obliged in the course of his journey to relax his speed in consideration of the labour which his horse might still have to undergo, he had time to consider maturely in what manner he should address the Dwarf, in order to extract from him the knowledge which he supposed him to be in possession of concerning the authors of his misfortunes. Hobbie, though blunt, plain of

speech, and hot of disposition, like most of his countrymen, was by no means deficient in the shrewdness which is also their characteristic. He reflected, that from what he had observed on the memorable night when the Dwarf was first seen, and from the conduct of that mysterious being ever since, he was likely to be rendered even more obstinate in his sullenness by threats and violence.

'I'll speak him fair,' he said, 'as auld Dickon advised me. Though folk say he has a league wi' Satan, he canna be sic an incarnate devil as no to take some pity in a case like mine; and folk threep he 'll whiles do good, charitable sort o' things. I 'll keep my heart doun as weel as I can, and stroke him wi' the hair; and if the warst come to the warst, it 's but wringing the neck o' him about at last.'

In this disposition of accommodation he approached the hut of the Solitary.

The old man was not upon his seat of audience nor could Hobbie perceive him in his garden or inclosures.

'He 's gotten into his very keep,' said Hobbie, 'maybe to be out o' the gate; but I'se pu' it doun about his lugs if I canna win at him otherwise.'

Having thus communed with himself, he raised his voice and invoked Elshie in a tone as supplicating as his conflicting feelings would permit. 'Elshie, my gude friend!' No reply. 'Elshie, canny Father Elshie!' The Dwarf remained mute. 'Sorrow be in the crooked carcass of thee!' said the Borderer between his teeth; and then again attempting a soothing tone — 'Good Father Elshie, a most miserable creature desires some counsel of your wisdom.'

'The better!' answered the shrill and discordant voice of the Dwarf through a very small window, resembling an arrow-slit, which he had constructed near the door of his dwelling, and through which he could see any one who approached it, without the possibility of their looking in upon him.

'The better!' said Hobbie, impatiently; 'what is the better, Elshie? Do you not hear me tell you I am the most miserable wretch living?'

'And do you not hear me tell you it is so much the better? and did I not tell you this morning, when you thought yourself so happy, what an evening was coming upon you?'

'That ye did e'en,' replied Hobbie, 'and that gars me come to you for advice now; they that foresaw the trouble maun ken the cure.'

'I know no cure for earthly trouble,' returned the Dwarf; 'or, if I did, why should I help others, when none hath aided me? Have I not lost wealth, that would have bought all thy barren hills a hundred times over? rank, to which thine is as that of a peasant? society, where there was an interchange of all that was amiable, of all that was intellectual? Have I not lost all this? Am I not residing here, the veriest outcast on the face of Nature, in the most hideous and most solitary of her retreats, myself more hideous than all that is around me? And why should other worms complain to me when they are trodden on, since I am myself lying crushed and writhing under the chariot-wheel?'

'Ye may have lost all this,' answered Hobbie, in the bitterness of emotion; 'land and friends, goods and gear — ye may hae lost them a'; but ye ne'er can hae sae sair a heart as mine, for ye ne'er lost nae Grace Armstrong. And now my last hopes are gane, and I shall ne'er see her mair.'

This he said in the tone of deepest emotion, and there followed a long pause, for the mention of his bride's name had overcome the more angry and irritable feelings of poor Hobbie. Ere he had again addressed the Solitary, the bony hand and long fingers of the latter, holding a large leathern bag, was thrust forth at the small window, and as it unclutched the burden, and let it drop with a clang upon the ground, his harsh voice again addressed Elliot. 'There — there lies a salve for every human ill; so, at least, each human wretch readily thinks. Begone; return twice as wealthy as thou wert before yesterday, and torment me no more with questions, complaints, or thanks; they are alike odious to me.'

'It is a' gowd, by Heaven!' said Elliot, having glanced at the contents; and then again addressing the Hermit — 'Muckle obliged for your goodwill; and I wad blythely gie you a bond for some o' the siller, or a wadset ower the lands o' Wideopen. But I dinna ken, Elshie; to be free wi' you, I dinna like to use siller unless I kend it was decently come by; and maybe it might turn into sclate-stanes and cheat some poor man.'

'Ignorant idiot!' retorted the Dwarf; 'the trash is as genuine poison as ever was dug out of the bowels of the earth. Take it, use it, and may it thrive with you as it hath done with me!'

'But I tell you,' said Elliot, 'it wasna about the gear that I was consulting you: it was a braw barn yard, doubtless, and

thirty head of finer cattle there werena on this side of the Cat-rail; but let the gear gang. If ye could but gie me speerings o' puir Grace, I would be content to be your slave for life, in ony thing that didna touch my salvation. O, Elshie, speak, man, speak!'

'Well, then,' answered the Dwarf, as if worn out by his importunity, 'since thou hast not enough of woes of thine own, but must needs seek to burden thyself with those of a partner, seek her whom thou hast lost in the *West*.'

'In the *West*? That 's a wide word.'

'It is the last,' said the Dwarf, 'which I design to utter'; and he drew the shutters of his window, leaving Hobbie to make the most of the hint he had given.

'The west! the west!' thought Elliot; 'the country is pretty quiet down that way, unless it were Jock o' the Todholes; and he 's ower auld now for the like o' thae jobs. West! By my life, it must be Westburnflat.' 'Elshie, just tell me one word. Am I right? Is it Westburnflat? If I am wrang, say sae. I wadna like to wyte an innocent neighbour wi' violence. No answer? It must be the Red Reiver. I didna think he wad hae ventured on me, neither, and sae mony kin as there 's o' us. I am thinking he 'll hae some better backing than his Cumberland friends. Fareweel to you, Elshie, and mony thanks. I downa be fashed wi' the siller e'en now, for I maun awa' to meet my friends at the trysting-place. Sae, if ye carena to open the window, ye can fetch it in after I 'm awa'.'

Still there was no reply.

'He 's deaf or he 's daft, or he 's baith; but I hae nae time to stay to claver wi' him.'

And off rode Hobbie Elliot towards the place of rendezvous which he had named to his friends.

Four or five riders were already gathered at the Trysting Pool. They stood in close consultation together, while their horses were permitted to graze among the poplars which over hung the broad still pool. A more numerous party were seen coming from the southward. It proved to be Earnscliff and his party, who had followed the track of the cattle as far as the English border, but had halted on the information that a considerable force was drawn together under some of the Jacobite gentlemen in that district, and there were tidings of insurrection in different parts of Scotland. This took away from the act which had been perpetrated the appearance of private animosity or love of plunder; and Earnscliff was now disposed

to regard it as a symptom of civil war. The young gentleman greeted Hobbie with the most sincere sympathy, and informed him of the news he had received.

'Then, may I never stir frae the bit,' said Elliot, 'if auld Ellieslaw is not at the bottom o' the haill villainy! Ye see he's leagued wi' the Cumberland Catholics; and that agrees weel wi' what Elshie hinted about Westburnflat, for Ellieslaw aye protected him, and he will want to harry and disarm the country about his ain hand before he breaks out.'

Some now remembered that the party of ruffians had been heard to say they were acting for James VIII., and were charged to disarm all rebels. Others had heard Westburnflat boast, in drinking parties, that Ellieslaw would soon be in arms for the Jacobite cause, and that he himself was to hold a command under him; [illegible]at they would be bad neighbours for young Earnscliff, and all that stood out for the established government. The result was a strong belief that Westburnflat had headed the party under Ellieslaw's orders: and they resolved to proceed instantly to the house of the former, and, if possible, to secure his person. They were by this time joined by so many of their dispersed friends that their number amounted to upwards of twenty horsemen, well mounted, and tolerably, though variously, armed.

A brook, which issued from a narrow glen among the hills, entered, at Westburnflat, upon the open marshy level, which, expanding about half a mile in every direction, gives name to the spot. In this place the character of the stream becomes changed, and, from being a lively brisk-running mountain-torrent, it stagnates, like a blue swollen snake, in dull deep windings through the swampy level. On the side of the stream, and nearly about the centre of the plain, arose the tower of Westburnflat, one of the few remaining strongholds formerly so numerous upon the Borders. The ground upon which it stood was gently elevated above the marsh for the space of about a hundred yards, affording an esplanade of dry turf, which extended itself in the immediate neighbourhood of the tower, but beyond which the surface presented to strangers was that of an impassable and dangerous bog. The owner of the tower and his inmates alone knew the winding and intricate paths, which, leading over ground that was comparatively sound, admitted visitors to his residence. But among the party which were assembled under Earnscliff's directions there was more than one person qualified to act as a guide. For although the owner's

character and habits of life were generally known, yet the laxity of feeling with respect to property prevented his being looked on with the abhorrence with which he must have been regarded in a more civilised country. He was considered, among his more peaceable neighbours, pretty much as a gambler, cock-fighter, or horse-jockey would be regarded at the present day; a person, of course, whose habits were to be condemned, and his society, in general, avoided, yet who could not be considered as marked with the indelible infamy attached to his profession in a society where the laws have been habitually observed. And their indignation was awakened against him upon this occasion, not so much on account of the general nature of the transaction, which was just such as was to be expected from this marauder, as because the violence had been perpetrated upon a neighbour against whom he had no cause of quarrel, against a friend of their own, above all, against one of the name of Elliot, to which clan most of them belonged. It was not, therefore, wonderful, that there should be several in the band pretty well acquainted with the locality of his habitation, and capable of giving such directions and guidance as soon placed the whole party on the open space of firm ground in front of the Tower of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER IX

So spak the knicht. The geaunt sed,
Lead forth with the the sely maid,
And mak me quite of the and sche;
For glaunsing ee, or brow so brent,
Or cheek with rose and lilye blent,
Me lists not ficht with the.

Romance of the Falcon.

THE tower, before which the party now stood, was a small square building, of the most gloomy aspect. The walls were of great thickness, and the windows, or slits which served the purpose of windows, seemed rather calculated to afford the defenders the means of employing missile weapons than for admitting air or light to the apartments within. A small battlement projected over the walls on every side, and afforded farther advantage of defence by its niched parapet, within which arose a steep roof flagged with grey stones. A single turret at one angle, defended by a door studded with huge iron nails, rose above the battlement, and gave access to the roof from within, by the spiral staircase which it inclosed. It seemed to the party that their motions were watched by some one concealed within this turret: and they were confirmed in their belief when, through a narrow loophole, a female hand was seen to wave a handkerchief, as if by way of signal to them. Hobbie was almost out of his senses with joy and eagerness.

'It was Grace's hand and arm,' he said; 'I can swear to it amang a thousand. There is not the like of it on this side of the Lowdens. We 'll have her out, lads, if we should carry off the Tower of Westburnflat stane by stane.'

Earnscliff, though he doubted the possibility of recognising a fair maiden's hand at such a distance from the eye of the lover, would say nothing to damp his friend's animated hopes, and it was resolved to summon the garrison.

The shouts of the party, and the winding of one or two horns,

at length brought to a loophole which flanked the entrance the haggard face of an old woman.

'That 's the Reiver's mother,' said one of the Elliots; 'she 's ten times waur than himsell, and is wyted for muckle of the ill he does about the country.'

'Wha are ye? What d' ye want here?' were the queries of the respectable progenitor.

'We are seeking William Greme of Westburnflat,' said Earnscliff.

'He 's no at hame,' returned the old dame.

'When did he leave home?' pursued Earnscliff.

'I canna tell,' said the portress.

'When will he return?' said Hobbie Elliot.

'I dinna ken naething about it,' replied the inexorable guardian of the keep.

'Is there anybody within the tower with you?' again demanded Earnscliff.

'Naebody but mysell and baudrons,' said the old woman.

'Then open the gate and admit us,' said Earnscliff; 'I am a justice of peace, and in search of the evidence of a felony.'

'Deil be in their fingers that draws a bolt for ye,' retorted the portress; 'for mine shall never do it. Thinkna ye shame o' yoursells, to come here siccan a band o' ye, wi' your swords and spears and steel-caps, to frighten a lone widow woman?'

'Our information,' said Earnscliff, 'is positive; we are seeking goods which have been forcibly carried off, to a great amount.'

'And a young woman that 's been cruelly made prisoner, that 's worth mair than a' the gear twice told,' said Hobbie.

'And I warn you,' continued Earnscliff, 'that your only way to prove your son's innocence is to give us quiet admittance to search the house.'

'And what will ye do if I carena to thraw the keys, or draw the bolts, or open the grate to sic a clanjamfrie?' said the old dame, scoffingly.

'Force our way with the king's keys, and break the neck of every living soul we find in the house, if ye dinna gie it ower forthwith!' menaced the incensed Hobbie.

'Threatened folks live lang,' said the hag, in the same tone of irony; 'there 's the iron grate, try your skeel on 't, lads; it has kept out as gude men as you or now.'

So saying, she laughed, and withdrew from the aperture through which she had held the parley.

The besiegers now opened a serious consultation. The immense thickness of the walls, and the small size of the windows, might for a time have even resisted cannon-shot. The entrance was secured, first, by a strong grated door, composed entirely of hammered iron, of such ponderous strength as seemed calculated to resist any force that could be brought against it. 'Pinches or forehammers will never pick upon 't,' said Hugh, the blacksmith of Ringleburn; 'ye might as weel batter at it wi' pipe-staples.'

Within the doorway, and at the distance of nine feet, which was the solid thickness of the wall, there was a second door of oak, crossed, both breadth and lengthways, with clenched bars of iron, and studded full of broad-headed nails. Besides all these defences, they were by no means confident in the truth of the old dame's assertion that she alone composed the garrison. The more knowing of the party had observed hoof-marks in the track by which they approached the tower, which seemed to indicate that several persons had very lately passed in that direction.

To all these difficulties was added their want of means for attacking the place. There was no hope of procuring ladders long enough to reach the battlements, and the windows, besides being very narrow, were secured with iron bars. Scaling was therefore out of the question: mining was still more so, for want of tools and gunpowder: neither were the besiegers provided with food, means of shelter, or other conveniences, which might have enabled them to convert the siege into a blockade: and there would, at any rate, have been a risk of relief from some of the marauder's comrades. Hobbie grinded and gnashed his teeth, as, walking round the fastness, he could devise no means of making a forcible entry. At length he suddenly exclaimed, 'And what for no do as our fathers did lang syne? Put hand to the wark, lads. Let us cut up bushes and briers, pile them before the door and set fire to them, and smoke that auld devil's dam as if she were to be reested for bacon.'

All immediately closed with this proposal, and some went to work with swords and knives to cut down the alder and hawthorn bushes which grew by the side of the sluggish stream, many of which were sufficiently decayed and dried for their purpose, while others began to collect them in a large stack, properly disposed for burning, as close to the iron grate as they could be piled. Fire was speedily obtained from one of their guns, and Hobbie was already advancing to the pile with a

kindled brand, when the surly face of the robber and the muzzle of a musquetoon were partially shown at a shot-hole which flanked the entrance. 'Mony thanks to ye,' he said, scoffingly, 'for collecting sae muckle winter eilding for us; but if ye step a foot nearer it wi' that lunt, it 's be the dearest step ye ever made in your days.'

'We 'll sune see that,' said Hobbie, advancing fearlessly with the torch.

The marauder snapped his piece at him, which, fortunately for our honest friend, did not go off; while Earnscliff, firing at the same moment at the narrow aperture and slight mark afforded by the robber's face, grazed the side of his head with a bullet. He had apparently calculated upon his post affording him more security, for he no sooner felt the wound, though a very slight one, than he requested a parley, and demanded to know what they meant by attacking in this fashion a peaceable and honest man, and shedding his blood in that lawless manner.

'We want your prisoner,' said Earnscliff, 'to be delivered up to us in safety.'

'And what concern have you with her?' replied the marauder.

'That,' retorted Earnscliff, 'you, who are detaining her by force, have no right to inquire.'

'Aweel, I think I can gie a guess,' said the robber. 'Weel, sirs, I am laith to enter into deadly feud with you by spilling ony of your bluid, though Earnscliff hasna stopped to shed mine, and he can hit a mark to a groat's breadth; so, to prevent mair skaith, I am willing to deliver up the prisoner, since nae less will please you.'

'And Hobbie's gear!' cried Simon of Hackburn. 'D'ye think you 're to be free to plunder the faulds and byres of a gentle Elliot as if they were an auld wife's hen's cavey!'

'As I live by bread,' replied Willie of Westburnflat — 'as I live by bread, I have not a single cloot o' them! They 're a' ower the march lang syne: there 's no a horn o' them about the tower. But I 'll see what o' them can be gotten back, and I 'll take this day twa days to meet Hobbie at the Castleton wi' twa friends on ilka side, and see to make an agreement about a' the wrang he can wyte me wi'.'

'Ay, ay,' said Elliot, 'that will do weel enough.' And then aside to his kinsman, 'Murrain on the gear! Lordsake, man! say nought about them. Let us but get puir Grace out o' that auld hellicat's clutches.'

'Will ye gie me your word, Earnscliff,' said the marauder, who still lingered at the shot-hole, 'your faith and troth, with hand and glove, that I am free to come and free to gae, with five minutes to open the grate and five minutes to steek it and to draw the bolts? less winna do, for they want creishing sairly. Will ye do this?'

'You shall have ful time,' said Earnscliff; 'I plight my faith and troth, my hand and my glove.'

'Wait there a moment, then,' said Westburnflat; 'or hear ye, I wad rather ye wad fa' back a pistol-shot from the door. It's no that I mistrust your word, Earnscliff; but it's best to be sure.'

'O, friend,' thought Hobbie to himself, as he drew back, 'an I had you but on Turner's Holm,[1] and naebody by but twa honest lads to see fair play, I wad make ye wish ye had broken your leg ere ye had touched beast or body that belanged to me!'

'He has a white feather in his wing, this same Westburnflat, after a',' said Simon of Hackburn, somewhat scandalised by his ready surrender. 'He 'll ne'er fill his father's boots.'

In the meanwhile, the inner door of the tower was opened, and the mother of the freebooter appeared in the space betwixt that and the outer grate. Willie himself was next seen, leading forth a female, and the old woman, carefully bolting the grate behind them, remained on the post as a sort of sentinel.

'Ony ane or twa o' ye come forward,' said the outlaw, 'and take her frae my hand haill and sound.'

Hobbie advanced eagerly to meet his betrothed bride. Earnscliff followed more slowly, to guard against treachery. Suddenly Hobbie slackened his pace in the deepest mortification, while that of Earnscliff was hastened by impatient surprise. It was not Grace Armstrong but Miss Isabella Vere whose liberation had been effected by their appearance before the tower.

'Where is Grace? where is Grace Armstrong?' exclaimed Hobbie, in the extremity of wrath and indignation.

'Not in my hands,' answered Westburnflat; 'ye may search the tower if ye misdoubt me.'

'You false villain, you shall account for her, or die on the spot,' said Elliot, presenting his gun.

But his companions, who now came up, instantly disarmed him of his weapon, exclaiming all at once, 'Hand and glove! faith and troth! Haud a care, Hobbie: we maun keep our faith wi' Westburnflat, were he the greatest rogue ever rode.'

[1] See Note 6.

Thus protected, the outlaw recovered his audacity, which had been somewhat daunted by the menacing gesture of Elliot.

'I have kept my word, sirs,' he said, 'and I look to have nae wrang amang ye. If this is no the prisoner ye sought,' he said, addressing Earnscliff, 'ye 'll render her back to me again. I am answerable for her to those that aught her.'

'For God's sake, Mr. Earnscliff, protect me!' said Miss Vere, clinging to her deliverer; 'do not you abandon one whom the whole world seems to have abandoned.'

'Fear nothing,' whispered Earnscliff, 'I will protect you with my life.' Then turning to Westburnflat, 'Villain!' he said, 'how dared you to insult this lady?'

'For that matter, Earnscliff,' answered the freebooter, 'I can answer to them that has better right to ask me than you have; but if *you* come with an armed force and take her awa' from them that her friends lodged her wi', how will you answer *that?* But it 's your ain affair. Nae single man can keep a tower against twenty. A' the men o' the Mearns downa do mair than they dow.'

'He lies most falsely,' said Isabella; 'he carried me off by violence from my father.'

'Maybe he only wanted ye to think sae, hinny,' replied the robber; 'but it 's nae business o' mine, let it be as it may. So ye winna resign her back to me?'

'Back to you, fellow? Surely no,' answered Earnscliff; 'I will protect Miss Vere, and escort her safely wherever she is pleased to be conveyed.'

'Ay, ay, maybe you and her hae settled that already,' said Willie of Westburnflat.

'And Grace?' interrupted Hobbie, shaking himself loose from the friends who had been preaching to him the sanctity of the safe conduct, upon the faith of which the freebooter had ventured from his tower, 'where 's Grace?' and he rushed on the marauder, sword in hand.

Westburnflat, thus pressed, after calling out, 'Godsake, Hobbie, hear me a gliff!' fairly turned his back and fled. His mother stood ready to open and shut the grate; but Hobbie struck at the freebooter as he entered with so much force that the sword made a considerable cleft in the lintel of the vaulted door, which is still shown as a memorial of the superior strength of those who lived in the days of yore.[1] Ere Hobbie could

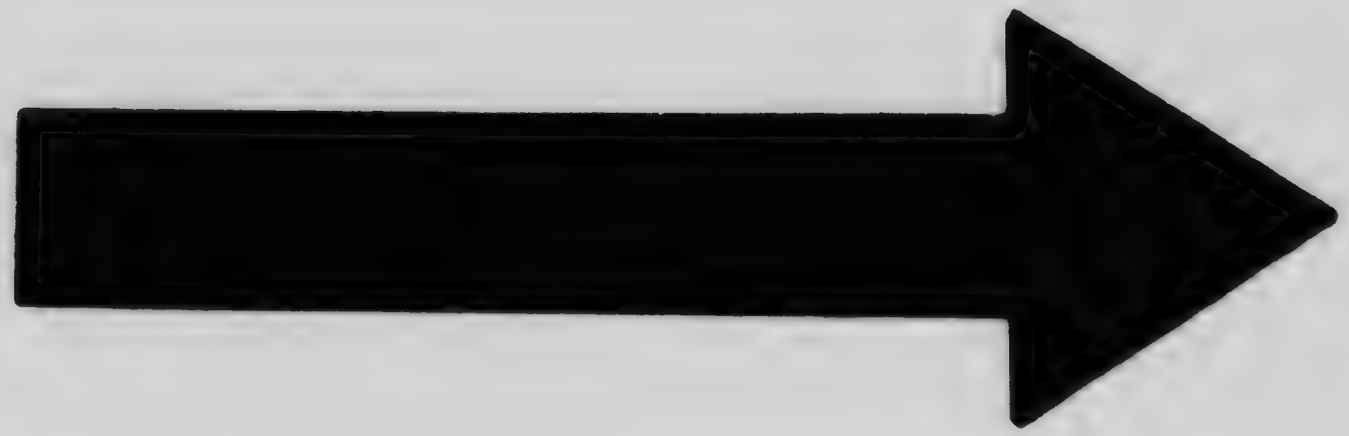
[1] See Pierced Lintel. Note 7.

repeat the blow, the door was shut and secured, and he was compelled to retreat to his companions, who were now preparing to break up the siege of Westburnflat. They insisted upon his accompanying them in their return.

'Ye hae broken truce already,' said old Dick of the Dingle; 'an we takena the better care, ye 'll play mair gowk's tricks, and make yoursell the laughing stock of the haill country, besides having your friends charged with slaughter under trust. Bide till the meeting at Castleton, as ye hae greed: and if he disna make ye amends, then we 'll hae it out o' his heart's blood. But let us gang reasonably to wark and keep our tryste, and I'se warrant we get back Grace and the kye an' a'.'

This cold-blooded reasoning went ill down with the unfortunate lover; but, as he could only obtain the assistance of his neighbours and kinsmen on their own terms, he was compelled to acquiesce in their notions of good faith and regular procedure.

Earnscliff now requested the assistance of a few of the party to convey Miss Vere to her father's castle of Ellieslaw, to which she was peremptory in desiring to be conducted. This was readily granted, and five or six young men agreed to attend him as an escort. Hobbie was not of the number. Almost heart broken by the events of the day and his final disappointment, he returned moodily home to take such measures as he could for the sustenance and protection of his family, and to arrange with his neighbours the farther steps which should be adopted for the recovery of Grace Armstrong. The rest of the party dispersed in different directions, as soon as they had crossed the morass. The outlaw and his mother watched them from the tower until they entirely disappeared.



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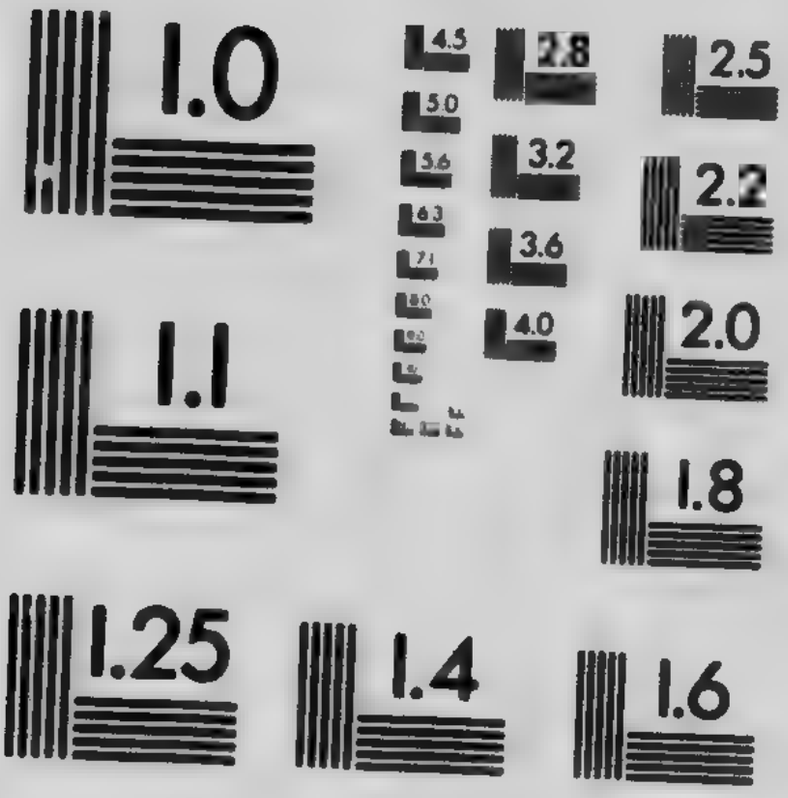

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CHAPTER X

I left my ladye's bower last night —
It was clad in wreaths of snaw, —
I 'll seek it when the sun is bright,
And sweet the roses blaw.

Old Ballad.

INCENSED at what he deemed the coldness of his friends in a cause which interested him so nearly, Hobbie had shaken himself free of their company, and was now on his solitary road homeward. 'The fiend founder thee!' said he, as he spurred impatiently his over-fatigued and stumbling horse; 'thou art like a' the rest o' them. Hae I not bred thee and fed thee and dressed thee wi' mine ain hand, and wouldst thou snapper now and break my neck at my utmost need? But thou 'rt e'en like the lave: the farthest off o' them a' is my cousin ten times removed, and day or night I wad hae served them wi' my best blood; and now I think they show mair regard to the common thief of Westburnflat than to their ain kinsman. But I should see the lights now in Heughfoot. Wae 's me!' he continued, recollecting himself, 'there will neither coal nor candle-light shine in the Heughfoot ony mair! An it werena for my mother and sisters and poor Grace, I could find in my heart to put spurs to the beast and loup ower the scaur into the water to make an end o't a'.' In this disconsolate mood he turned his horse's bridle towards the cottage in which his family had found refuge.

As he approached the door he heard whispering and tittering amongst his sisters. 'The deevil 's in the women,' said poor Hobbie; 'they would nicker and laugh and giggle if their best friend was lying a corp; and yet I am glad they can keep up their hearts sae weel, poor silly things: but the dirdum fa's on me, to be sure, and no on them.'

While he thus meditated, he was engaged in fastening up his horse in a shed. 'Thou maun do without horse-sheet and

surcingle now, lad,' he said, addressing the animal; 'you and me hae had a downcome alike; we had better hae fa'en in the deepest pool o' Tarras.'

He was interrupted by the youngest of his sisters, who came running out, and, speaking in a constrained voice, as if to stifle some emotion, called out to him, 'What are ye doing there, Hobbie, fiddling about the naig, and there's ane frae Cumberland been waiting here for ye this hour and mair? Haste ye in, man; I'll take off the saddle.'

'Ane frae Cumberland!' exclaimed Elliot; and, putting the bridle of his horse into the hand of his sister, he rushed into the cottage. 'Where is he? where is he?' he exclaimed, glancing eagerly around, and seeing only females. 'Did he bring news of Grace?'

'He doughtna bide an instant langer,' said the elder sister, still with a suppressed laugh.

'Hout fie, bairns!' said the old lady, with something of a good-humoured reproof, 'ye shouldna vex your billie Hobbie that way. Look round, my bairn, and see if there isna ane here mair than ye left this morning.'

Hobbie looked eagerly round. 'There's you and the three titties.'

'There's four of us now, Hobbie, lad,' said the youngest, who at this moment entered.

In an instant Hobbie had in his arms Grace Armstrong, who, with one of his sisters' plaid around her, had passed unnoticed at his first entrance. 'How dared you do this?' said Hobbie.

'It wasna my fault,' said Grace, endeavouring to cover her face with her hands to hide at once her blushes and escape the storm of hearty kisses with which her bridegroom punished her simple stratagem — 'it wasna my fault, Hobbie; ye should kiss Jeanie and the rest o' them, for they hae the wyte o't.'

'And so I will,' said Hobbie, and embraced and kissed his sisters and grandmother a hundred times, while the whole party half-laughed, half-cried, in the extremity of their joy. 'I am the happiest man,' said Hobbie, throwing himself down on a seat, almost exhausted — 'I am the happiest man in the world!'

'Then, O my dear bairn,' said the good old dame, who lost no opportunity of teaching her lesson of religion at those moments when the heart was best open to receive it — 'then, O my son, give praise to Him that brings smiles out o' tears and joy or

o' grief, as He brought light out o' darkness and the world out o' naething. Was it not my word, that if ye could say "His will be done," ye might hae cause to say "His name be praised"?'

'It was — it was your word, grannie; and I do praise Him for His mercy, and for leaving me a good parent when my ain were gane,' said honest Hobbie, taking her hand, 'that puts me in mind to think of Him baith in happiness and distress.'

There was a solemn pause of one or two minutes, employed in the exercise of mental devotion, which expressed, in purity and sincerity, the gratitude of the affectionate family to that Providence who had unexpectedly restored to their embraces the friend whom they had lost.

Hobbie's first inquiries were concerning the adventures which Grace had undergone. They were told at length, but amounted in substance to this: That she was awaked by the noise which the ruffians made in breaking into the house, and by the resistance made by one or two of the servants, which was soon overpowered; that, dressing herself hastily, she ran downstairs, and having seen, in the scuffle, Westburnflat's vizard drop off, imprudently named him by his name and besought him for mercy; that the ruffian instantly stopped her mouth, dragged her from the house, and placed her on horseback behind one of his associates.

'I'll break the accursed neck of him,' said Hobbie, 'if there werena another Græme in the land but himsell!'

She proceeded to say, that she was carried southward along with the party, and the spoil which they drove before them, until they had crossed the Border. Suddenly a person, known to her as a kinsman of Westburnflat, came riding very fast after the marauders, and told their leader that his cousin had learnt from a sure hand that no luck would come of it unless the lass was restored to her friends. After some discussion the chief of the party seemed to acquiesce. Grace was placed behind her new guardian, who pursued in silence, and with great speed, the least-frequented path to the Heughfoot, and ere evening closed set down the fatigued and terrified damsel within a quarter of a mile of the dwelling of her friends. Many and sincere were the congratulations which passed on all sides.

As these emotions subsided, less pleasing considerations began to intrude themselves.

'This is a miserable place for ye a',' said Hobbie, looking around him; 'I can sleep weel eneugh mysell outbye beside the naig, as I hae done mony a lang night on the hills; but how

ye are to put yoursells up, I canna see! [illegible] what's waur, I canna mend it; and what's waur [illegible] a', the morn may come, and the day after that, without your being a bit better off.'

'It was a cowardly cruel thing,' said one of the sisters, looking round, 'to harry a puir family to the bare wa's this gate.'

'And leave us neither stirk nor stot,' said the youngest brother, who now entered, 'nor sheep nor lamb, nor aught that eats grass and corn.'

'If they had ony quarrel wi' us,' said Harry, the second brother, 'were we na ready to have fought it out? And that we should have been a' frae hame too, ane and a' upon the hill. Odd, an we had been at hame, Will Graeme's stamach shouldna hae wanted its morning; but it 's biding him, is it na, Hobbie?'

'Our neighbours hae taen a day at the Castleton to gree wi' him at the sight o' men,' said Hobbie, mournfully; 'they behoved to have it a' their ain gate, or there was nae help to be got at their hands.'

'To gree wi' him!' exclaimed both his brothers at once, 'after siccan an act of stouthrife as hasna been heard o' in the country since the auld riding days!'

'Very true, billies, and my blood was e'en boiling at it; but — the sight o' Grace Armstrong has settled it brawly.'

'But the stocking, Hobbie?' said John Elliot; 'we 're utterly ruined. Harry and I hae been to gather what was on the outbye land, and 'here 's scarce a cloot left. I kenna how we 're to carry on. We maun a' gang to the wars, I think. Westburnflat hasna the means, e'en if he had the will, to make up our loss; there 's nae mends to be got out o' him, but what ye take out o' his banes. He hasna a four-footed creature but the vicious blood thing he rides on, and that 's sair trash'd wi' his night wark. We are ruined stoop and roop.'

Hobbie cast a mournful glance on Grace Armstrong, who returned it with a downcast look and a gentle sigh.

'Dinna be cast down, bairns,' said the grandmother, 'we hae gude friends that winna forsake us in adversity. There 's Sir Thomas Kittlecummer is my third cousin by the mother's side, and he has come by a hantle siller, and been made a knight-baronet into the bargain, for being ane o' the commissioners at the Union.'

'He wadna gie a bodle to save us frae famishing,' said

Hobbie; 'and, if he did, the bread that I bought wi't would stick in my throat when I thought it was part of the price of puir auld Scotland's crown and independence.'

'There 's the Laird o' Dunder, ane o' the auldest families in Tiviotdale.'

'He 's in the tolbooth, mother — he 's in the Heart of Mid-Lowden for a thousand merk he borrowed from Saunders Wyliecoat, the writer.'

'Poor man!' exclaimed Mrs. Elliot, 'can we no send him something, Hobbie?'

'Ye forget, grannie — ye forget we want help oursells,' said Hobbie, somewhat peevishly.

'Troth did I, hinny,' replied the good-natured lady, 'just at the instant; it 's sae natural to think on ane's bluid relations before themsells. But there 's young Earnscliff.'

'He has ower little o' his ain; and siccan a name to keep up, it wad be a shame,' said Hobbie, 'to burden him wi' our distress. And I 'll tell ye, grannie, it 's needless to sit rhyming ower the style of a' your kith, kin, and allies, as if there was a charm in their braw names to do us good. The grandees hae forgotten us, and those of our ain degree hae just little eneugh to gang on wi' themsells; ne'er a friend hae we that can or will help us to stock the farm again.'

'Then, Hobbie, we maun trust in Him that can raise up friends and fortune out o' the bare moor, as they say.'

Hobbie sprung upon his feet. 'Ye are right, grannie!' he exclaimed — 'ye are right. I do ken a friend on the bare moor that baith can and will help us. The turns o' this day hae dung my head clean hirdie-girdie. I left as muckle gowd lying on Mucklestane Moor this morning as would plenish the house and stock the Heughfoot twice ower, and I am certain sure Elshie wadna grudge us the use of it.'

'Elshie!' said his grandmother in astonishment; 'what Elshie do you mean?'

'What Elshie should I mean, but Canny Elshie, the Wight o' Mucklestane?' replied Hobbie.

'God forfend, my bairn, you should gang to fetch water out o' broken cisterns, or seek for relief frae them that deal wi' the Evil One! There was never luck in their gifts nor grace in their paths. And the haill country kens that body Elshie 's an unco man. O, if there was the law, and the douce quiet administration of justice that makes a kingdom flourish in righteousness, the like o' them suldna be suffered to live!' The

wizard and the witch are the abomination and the evil thing in the land.'

'Troth, mother,' answered Hobbie, 'ye may say what ye like, but I am in the mind that witches and warlocks havena half the power they had lang syne; at least, sure am I that ae ill-deviser, like auld Ellieslaw, or ae ill-doer, like that d—d villain Westburnflat, is a greater plague and abomination in a country-side than a haill curnie o' the warst witches that ever capered on a broomstick or played cantrips on Fastern's E'en. It wad hae been lang or Elshie had burnt down my house and barns, and I am determined to try if he will do aught to build them up again. He 's weel kend a skilfu' man ower a' the country, as far as Brough-under-Stainmore.'

'Bide a wee, my bairn,' said the anxious grandmother; 'mind his benefits havena thriven wi' a'body. Jock Howden died o' the very same disorder Elshie pretended to cure him of, about the fa' o' the leaf; and though he helped Lambside's cow weel out o' the moor-ill, yet the louping-ill 's been sairer amang his sheep than ony season before. And then I have heard he uses sic words abusing human nature that 's like a fleeing in the face of Providence; and ye mind ye said yoursell, the first time ye ever saw him, that he was mair like a bogle than a living thing.'

'Hout, mother,' said Hobbie, 'Elshie 's no that bad a chield; he 's a grewsome spectacle for a crooked disciple, to be sure, and a rough talker, but his bark is waur than his bite. Sae, if I had anes something to eat, for I havena had a morsel ower my throat this day, I wad streek mysell down for twa or three hours aside the beast, and be on and awa' to Mucklestane wi' the first skreigh o' morning.'

'And what for no the night, Hobbie,' said Harry, 'and I will ride wi' ye?'

'My naig is tired,' said Hobbie.

'Ye may take mine, then,' said John.

'But I am a wee thing wearied mysell.'

'You wearied?' said Harry: 'shame on ye! I have kend ye keep the saddle four-and-twenty hours thegither, and ne'er sic a word as weariness in your wame.'

'The night 's very dark,' said Hobbie, rising and looking through the casement of the cottage; 'and, to speak truth and shame the deil, though Elshie 's a real honest fallow, yet somegate I would rather take daylight wi' me when I gang to visit him.'

This frank avowal put a stop to further argument; and Hobbie, having thus compromised matters between the rashness of his brother's counsel and the timid cautions which he received from his grandmother, refreshed himself with such food as the cottage afforded: and, after a cordial salutation all round, retired to the shed and stretched himself beside his trusty palfrey. His brothers shared between them some trusses of clean straw, disposed in the stall usually occupied by old Annaple's cow; and the females arranged themselves for repose as well as the accommodations of the cottage would permit.

With the first dawn of morning Hobbie arose; and, having rubbed down and saddled his horse, he set forth to Mucklestane Moor. He avoided the company of either of his brothers, from an idea that the Dwarf was most propitious to those who visited him alone.

'The creature,' said he to himself, as he went along, 'is no neighbourly: ae body at a time is fully mair than he weel can abide. I wonder if he 's looked out o' the crib o' him to gather up the bag o' siller. If he hasna done that, it may hae been a braw windfa' for somebody, and I 'll be finely flung. Come, Tarras,' said he to his horse, striking him at the same time with his spur, 'make mair fit, man; we maun be first on the field if we can.'

He was now on the heath, which began to be illuminated by the beams of the rising sun; the gentle declivity which he was descending presented him a distinct, though distant, view of the Dwarf's dwelling. The door opened, and Hobbie witnessed with his own eyes that phenomenon which he had frequently heard mentioned. Two human figures (if that of the Dwarf could be termed such) issued from the solitary abode of the Recluse, and stood as if in converse together in the open air. The taller form then stooped, as if taking something up which lay beside the door of the hut, then both moved forward a little way, and again halted [illegible] conference. All Hobbie's superstitious terrors revived [illegible] nessing this spectacle. That the Dwarf would open [illegible]ng to a mortal guest was as improbable as that any [illegible]ould choose voluntarily to be his nocturnal visitor; and, under full conviction that he beheld a wizard holding intercourse with his familiar spirit, Hobbie pulled in at once his breath and his bridle, resolved not to incur the indignation of either by a hasty intrusion on their conference. They were probably aware of his approach, for he had not halted for a moment before the Dwarf returned to

his cottage; and the taller figure who had accompanied him glided round the inclosure of the garden, and seemed to disappear from the eyes of the admiring Hobbie.

'Saw ever mortal the like o' that!' said Elliot; 'but my case is desperate, sae, if he were Beelzebub himsell, I'se venture down the brae on him.'

Yet, notwithstanding his assumed courage, he slackened his pace when, nearly upon the very spot where he had last seen the tall figure, he discerned, as if lurking among the long heather, a small black rough-looking object, like a terrier dog.

'He has nae dog that ever I heard of,' said Hobbie, 'but mony a deil about his hand, Lord forgie me for saying sic a word! It keeps its grund, be what it like. I'm judging it's a badger; but whae kens what shapes thae bogles will take to fright a body? it will maybe start up like a lion or a crocodile when I come nearer. I'se e'en drive a stane at it, for if it change its shape when I'm ower near, Tarras will never stand it; and it will be ower muckle to hae him and the deil to fight wi' baith at ance.'

He therefore cautiously threw a stone at the object, which continued motionless. 'It's nae living thing, after a',' said Hobbie, approaching, 'but the very bag o' siller he flung out o' the window yesterday! and that other queer lang creature has just brought it sae muckle farther on the way to me.' He then advanced and lifted the heavy fur pouch, which was quite full of gold. 'Mercy on us!' said Hobbie, whose heart fluttered between glee at the revival of his hopes and prospects in life and suspicion of the purpose for which this assistance was afforded him — 'mercy on us! it's an awfu' thing to touch what has been sae lately in the claws of something no canny. I canna shake mysell loose o' the belief that there has been some jookery-paukery of Satan's in a' this; but I am determined to conduct mysell like an honest man and a good Christian, come o't what will.'

He advanced accordingly to the cottage door, and having knocked repeatedly without receiving any answer, he at length elevated his voice and addressed the inmate of the hut. 'Elshie! Father Elshie! I ken ye 're within doors, and wanking, for I saw ye at the door-cheek as I cam ower the bent; will ye come out and speak just a gliff to ane that has mony thanks to gie ye? It was a' true ye tell'd me about Westburnflat; but he 's sent back Grace safe and skaithless, sae there 's nae ill happened yet but what may be suffered or sustained. Wad ye

but come out a gliff, man, or but say ye 're listening? Aweel, since ye winna answer, I'se e'en proceed wi' my tale. Ye see I hae been thinking it wad be a sair thing on twa young folk, like Grace and me, to put aff our marriage for mony years till I was abroad and came back again wi' some gear; and they say folk maunna take booty in the wars as they did lang syne, and the queen's pay is a sma' matter; there 's nae gathering gear on that; and then my grandame 's auld; and my sisters wad sit peengin' at the ingle-side for want o' me to ding them about; and Earnscliff, or the neighbourhood, or maybe your ain sell, Elshie, might want some good turn that Hob Eliot could do ye; and it 's a pity that the auld house o' the Heughfoot should be wrecked a'thegither. Sae I was thinking — but deil hae me, that I should say sae,' continued he, checking himself, 'if I can bring mysell to ask a favour of ane that winna sae muckle as ware a word on me, to tell me if he hears me speaking till him.'

'Say what thou wilt, do what thou wilt,' answered the Dwarf from his cabin, 'but begone, and leave me at peace.'

'Weel, weel,' replied Elliot, 'since ye are willing to hear me, I'se make my tale short. Since ye are sae kind as to say ye are content to lend me as muckle siller as will stock and plenish the Heughfoot, I am content, on my part, to accept the courtesy wi' mony kind thanks; and troth, I think it will be as safe in my hands as yours, if ye leave it flung about in that gate for the first loon body to lift, forbye the risk o' bad neighbours that can win through steekit doors and lockfast places, as I can tell to my cost. I say, since ye hae sae muckle consideration for me, I'se be blythe to accept your kindness; and my grandmother and me — she 's a life-renter, and I am fiar, o' the lands o' Wideopen — would grant you a wadset or an heritable bond for the siller, and to pay the annual rent half-yearly; and Saunders Wyliecoat to draw the bond, and you to be at nae charge wi' the writ. . .'

'Cut short thy jargon, and begone,' said the Dwarf; 'thy loquacious bull-headed honesty makes thee a more intolerable plague than the light-fingered courtier who would take a man's all without troubling him with either thanks, explanation, or apology. Hence, I say! thou art one of those tame slaves whose word is as good as their bond. Keep the money, principal and interest, until I demand it of thee.'

'But,' continued the pertinacious Borderer, 'we are a' life-like and death-like, Elshie, and there really should be some black

and white on this transaction. Sae just make me a minute or missive in ony form ye like, and I'se write it fair ower, and subscribe it before famous witnesses. Only, Elshie, I wad wuss ye to pit naething in 't that may be prejudicial to my salvation; for I 'll hae the minister to read it ower, and it wad only be exposing yoursell to nae purpose. And now I 'm ganging awa', for ye 'll be wearied o' my cracks, and I am wearied wi' cracking without an answer; and I'se bring ye a bit o' bride's-cake ane o' thae days, and maybe bring Grace to see you. Ye wad like to see Grace, man, for as dour as ye are. Eh, Lord! I wish he may be weel, that was a sair grane! or maybe he thought I was speaking of heavenly grace, and no of Grace Armstrong. Poor man, I am very doubtfu' o' his condition; but I am sure he is as kind to me as if I were his son, and a queer-looking father I wad hae had, if that had been e'en sae.'

Hobbie now relieved his benefactor of his presence, and rode blythely home to display his treasure, and consult upon the means of repairing the damage which his fortune had sustained through the aggression of the Red Reiver of Westburnflat.

CHAPTER XI

Three ruffians seized me yester morn,
Alas! a maiden most forlorn;
They choked my cries with wicked might,
And bound me on a palfrey white:
As sure as Heaven shall pity me,
I cannot tell what men they be.

Christabel.

THE course of our story must here revert a little to detail the circumstances which had placed Miss Vere in the unpleasant situation from which she was unexpectedly, and indeed unintentionally, liberated by the appearance of Earnscliff and Elliot, with their friends and followers, before the Tower of Westburnflat.

On the morning preceding the night in which Hobbie's house was plundered and burnt, Miss Vere was requested by her father to accompany him in a walk through a distant part of the romantic grounds which lay round his castle of Ellieslaw. 'To hear was to obey,' in the true style of Oriental despotism; but Isabella trembled in silence while she followed her father through rough paths, now winding by the side of the river, now ascending the cliffs which serve for its banks. A single servant, selected perhaps for his stupidity, was the only person who attended them. From her father's silence Isabella little doubted that he had chosen this distant and sequestered scene to resume the argument which they had so frequently maintained upon the subject of Sir Frederick's addresses, and that he was meditating in what manner he should most effectually impress upon her the necessity of receiving him as her suitor. But her fears seemed for some time to be unfounded. The only sentences which her father from time to time addressed to her respected the beauties of the romantic landscape through which they strolled, and which varied its features at every step. To these observations, although they seemed to come from a

heart occupied by more gloomy as well as more important cares, Isabella endeavoured to answer in a manner as free and unconstrained as it was possible for her to assume, amid the involuntary apprehensions which crowded upon her imagination.

Sustaining with mutual difficulty a desultory conversation, they at length gained the centre of a small wood, composed of large oaks, intermingled with birches, mountain-ash, hazel, holly, and a variety of underwood. The boughs of the tall trees met closely above, and the underwood filled up each interval between their trunks below. The spot on which they stood was rather more open; still, however, embowered under the natural arcade of tall trees, and darkened on the sides for a space around by a great and lively growth of copsewood and bushes.

'And here, Isabella,' said Mr. Vere, as he pursued the conversation, so often resumed, so often dropped — 'here I would erect an altar to Friendship.'

'To Friendship, sir!' said Miss Vere; 'and why on this gloomy and sequestered spot, rather than elsewhere?'

'O, the propriety of the *locale* is easily vindicated,' replied her father, with a sneer. 'You know, Miss Vere — for you, I am well aware, are a learned young lady — you know that the Romans were not satisfied with embodying, for the purpose of worship, each useful quality and moral virtue to which they could give a name; but they, moreover, worshipped the same under each variety of titles and attributes which could give a distinct shade or individual character to the virtue in question. Now, for example, the Friendship to whom a temple should be here dedicated is not Masculine Friendship, which abhors and despises duplicity, art, and disguise; but Female Friendship, which consists in little else than a mutual disposition on the part of the friends, as they call themselves, to cheat each other in observing fraud and petty intrigue.'

'You are severe, sir,' said Miss Vere.

'Only just,' said her father; 'a humble copier I am from nature, with the advantage of contemplating two such excellent studies as Lucy Ilderton and yourself.'

'If I have been unfortunate enough to offend, sir, I can conscientiously excuse Miss Ilderton from being either my counsellor or confidante.'

'Indeed! how came you, then,' said Mr. Vere, 'by the flippancy of speech and pertness of argument by which you have disgusted Sir Frederick and given me of late such deep offence?'

'If my manner has been so unfortunate as to displease you, sir, it is impossible for me to apologise too deeply or too sincerely; but I cannot confess the same contrition for having answered Sir Frederick flippantly when he pressed me rudely. Since he forgot I was a lady, it was time to show him that I am at least a woman.'

'Reserve, then, your pertness for those who press you on the topic, Isabella,' said her father, coldly; 'for my part, I am weary of the subject, and will never speak upon it again.'

'God bless you, my dear father!' said Isabella, seizing his reluctant hand; 'there is nothing you can impose on me, save the task of listening to this man's persecution, that I will call, or think, a hardship.'

'You are very obliging, Miss Vere, when it happens to suit you to be dutiful,' said her unrelenting father, forcing himself at the same time from the affectionate grasp of her hand; 'but henceforward, child, I shall save myself the trouble of offering you unpleasant advice on any topic. You must look to yourself.'

At this moment four ruffians rushed upon them. Mr. Vere and his servant drew their hangers, which it was the fashion of the time to wear, and attempted to defend themselves and protect Isabella. But while each of them was engaged by an antagonist, she was forced into the thicket by the two remaining villains, who placed her and themselves on horses which stood ready behind the copsewood. They mounted at the same time, and, placing her between them, set off at a round gallop, holding the reins of her horse on each side. By many an obscure and winding path, over dale and down, through moss and moor, she was conveyed to the Tower of Westburnflat, where she remained strictly watched, but not otherwise ill-treated, under the guardianship of the old woman to whose son that retreat belonged. No entreaties could prevail upon the hag to give Miss Vere any information on the object of her being carried forcibly off and confined in this secluded place. The arrival of Earnscliff with a strong party of horsemen before the tower alarmed the robber. As he had already directed Grace Armstrong to be restored to her friends, it did not occur to him that this unwelcome visit was on her account; and seeing at the head of the party Earnscliff, whose attachment to Miss Vere was whispered in the country, he doubted not that her liberation was the sole object of the attack upon his fastness. The dread of personal consequences compelled him

to deliver up his prisoner in the manner we have already related.

At the moment the tramp of horses was heard which carried off the daughter of Ellieslaw, her father fell to the earth, and his servant, a stout young fellow, who was gaining ground on the ruffian with whom he had been engaged, left the combat to come to his master's assistance, little doubting that he had received a mortal wound. Both the villains immediately desisted from farther combat, and, retreating into the thicket, mounted their horses and went off at full speed after their companions. Meantime, Dixon had the satisfaction to find Mr. Vere not only alive, but unwounded. He had overreached himself and stumbled, it seemed, over the root of a tree in making too eager a blow at his antagonist. The despair he felt at his daughter's disappearance was, in Dixon's phrase, such as would have melted the heart of a 'whinstane,' and he was so much exhausted by his feelings, and the vain researches which he made to discover the track of the ravishers, that a considerable time elapsed ere he reached home and communicated the alarm to his domestics.

All his conduct and gestures were those of a desperate man.

'Speak not to me, Sir Frederick,' he said, impatiently; 'you are no father: she was my child, an ungrateful one, I fear, but still my child — my only child. Where is Miss Ilderton? She must know something of this. It corresponds with what I was informed of her schemes. Go, Dixon, call Ratcliffe here. Let him come without a minute's delay.'

The person he had named at this moment entered the room.

'I say, Dixon,' continued Mr. Vere, in an altered tone, 'let Mr. Ratcliffe know I beg the favour of his company on particular business. Ah! my dear sir,' he proceeded, as if noticing him for the first time, 'you are the very man whose advice can be of the utmost service to me in this cruel extremity.'

'What has happened, Mr. Vere, to discompose you?' said Mr. Ratcliffe, gravely; and while the Laird of Ellieslaw details to him, with the most animated gestures of grief and indignation, the singular adventure of the morning, we shall take the opportunity to inform our readers of the relative circumstances in which these gentlemen stood to each other.

In early youth Mr. Vere of Ellieslaw had been remarkable for a career of dissipation, which in advanced life he had exchanged for the no less destructive career of dark and tur-

bulent ambition. In both cases he had gratified the predominant passion without respect to the diminution of his private fortune, although, where such inducements to profusion were wanting, he was deemed close, avaricious, and grasping. His affairs being much embarrassed by his earlier extravagance, he went to England, where he was understood to have formed a very advantageous matrimonial connexion. He was many years absent from his family estate. Suddenly and unexpectedly he returned a widower, bringing with him his daughter, then a girl of about ten years old. From this moment his expense seemed unbounded in the eyes of the simple inhabitants of his native mountains. It was supposed he must necessarily have plunged himself deeply in debt. Yet he continued to live in the same lavish expense until some months before the commencement of our narrative, when the public opinion of his embarrassed circumstances was confirmed by the residence of Mr. Ratcliffe at Ellieslaw Castle, who, by the tacit consent, though obviously to the great displeasure, of the lord of the mansion, seemed, from the moment of his arrival, to assume and exercise a predominant and unaccountable influence in the management of his private affairs.

Mr. Ratcliffe was a grave, steady, reserved man, in an advanced period of life. To those with whom he had occasion to speak upon business he appeared uncommonly well versed in all its forms. With others he held little communication; but in any casual intercourse or conversation displayed the powers of an active and well-informed mind. For some time before taking up his final residence at the castle, he had been an occasional visitor there, and was at such times treated by Mr. Vere (contrary to his general practice towards those who were inferior to him in rank) with marked attention, and even deference. Yet his arrival always appeared to be an embarrassment to his host and his departure a relief; so that, when he became a constant inmate of the family, it was impossible not to observe indications of the displeasure with which Mr. Vere regarded his presence. Indeed, their intercourse formed a singular mixture of confidence and constraint. Mr. Vere's most important affairs were regulated by Mr. Ratcliffe; and, although he was none of those indulgent men of fortune who, too indolent to manage their own business, are glad to devolve it upon another, yet in many instances he was observed to give up his own judgment and submit to the contrary opinions which Mr. Ratcliffe did not hesitate distinctly to express.

Nothing seemed to vex Mr. Vere more than when strangers indicated any observation of the state of tutelage under which he appeared to labour. When it was noticed by Sir Frederick or any of his intimates, he sometimes repelled their remarks haughtily and indignantly, and sometimes endeavoured to evade them by saying, with a forced laugh, 'That Ratcliffe knew his own importance, but that he was the most honest and skilful fellow in the world; and that it would be impossible for him to manage his English affairs without his advice and assistance.' Such was the person who entered the room at the moment Mr. Vere was summoning him to his presence, and who now heard with surprise, mingled with obvious incredulity, the hasty narrative of what had befallen Isabella.

Her father concluded, addressing Sir Frederick and the other gentlemen, who stood around in astonishment, 'And now, my friends, you see the most unhappy father in Scotland. Lend me your assistance, gentlemen; give me your advice, Mr. Ratcliffe. I am incapable of acting or thinking under the unexpected violence of such a blow.'

'Let us take our horses, call our attendants, and scour the country in pursuit of the villains,' said Sir Frederick.

'Is there no one whom you can suspect,' said Ratcliffe, gravely, 'of having some motive for this strange crime? These are not the days of romance, when ladies are carried off merely for their beauty.'

'I fear,' said Mr. Vere, 'I can too well account for this strange incident. Read this letter, which Miss Lucy Ilderton thought fit to address from my house of Ellieslaw to young Mr. Earnscliff, whom, of all men, I have a hereditary right to call my enemy. You see she writes to him as the confidante of a passion which he has the assurance to entertain for my daughter; tells him she serves his cause with her friend very ardently, but that he has a friend in the garrison who serves him yet more effectually. Look particularly at the pencilled passages, Mr. Ratcliffe, where this meddling girl recommends bold measures, with an assurance that his suit would be successful anywhere beyond the bounds of the barony of Ellieslaw.'

'And you argue, from this romantic letter of a very romantic young lady, Mr. Vere,' said Ratcliffe, 'that young Earnscliff has carried off your daughter, and committed a very great and criminal act of violence, on no better advice and assurance than that of Miss Lucy Ilderton?'

'What else can I think?' said Ellieslaw.

'What else *can* you think?' said Sir Frederick; 'or who else could have any motive for committing such a crime?'

'Were that the best mode of fixing the guilt,' said Mr. Ratcliffe, calmly, 'there might easily be pointed out persons to whom such actions are more congenial, and who have also sufficient motives of instigation. Supposing it were judged advisable to remove Miss Vere to some place in which constraint might be exercised upon her inclinations to a degree which cannot at present be attempted under the roof of Ellieslaw Castle? What says Sir Frederick Langley to that supposition?'

'I say,' returned Sir Frederick, 'that, although Mr. Vere may choose to endure in Mr. Ratcliffe freedoms totally inconsistent with his situation in life, I will not permit such license of innuendo, by word or look, to be extended to me with impunity.'

'And I say,' said young Mareschal of Mareschal Wells, who was also a guest at the castle, 'that you are all stark mad to be standing wrangling here, instead of going in pursuit of the ruffians.'

'I have ordered off the domestics already in the track most likely to overtake them,' said Mr. Vere; 'if you will favour me with your company, we will follow them and assist in the search.'

The efforts of the party were totally unsuccessful, probably because Ellieslaw directed the pursuit to proceed in the direction of Earnscliff Tower, under the supposition that the owner would prove to be the author of the violence, so that they followed a direction diametrically opposite to that in which the ruffians had actually proceeded. In the evening they returned harassed and out of spirits. But other guests had in the meanwhile arrived at the castle; and after the recent loss sustained by the owner had been related, wondered at, and lamented, the recollection of it was, for the present, drowned in the discussion of deep political intrigues, of which the crisis and explosion were momentarily looked for.

Several of the gentlemen who took part in this divan were Catholics, and all of them stanch Jacobites, whose hopes were at present at the highest pitch, as an invasion in favour of the Pretender was daily expected from France, which Scotland, between the defenceless state of its garrisons and fortified places and the general disaffection of the inhabitants, was rather prepared to welcome than to resist. Ratcliffe, who neither sought to assist at their consultations on this subject nor was invited to do so, had in the meanwhile retired to his own apartment.

Miss Ilderton was sequestered from society in a sort of honourable confinement, 'until,' said Mr. Vere, 'she should be safely conveyed home to her father's house,' an opportunity for which occurred on the following day.

The domestics could not help thinking it remarkable how soon the loss of Miss Vere, and the strange manner in which it had happened, seemed to be forgotten by the other guests at the castle. They knew not that those the most interested in her fate were well acquainted with the cause of her being carried off, and the place of her retreat; and that the others, in the anxious and doubtful moments which preceded the breaking forth of a conspiracy, were little accessible to any feelings but what arose immediately out of their own machinations.

CHAPTER XII

Some one way, some another. Do you know
Where we may apprehend her?

THE researches after Miss Vere were (for the sake of appearances, perhaps) resumed on the succeeding day, with similar bad success, and the party were returning towards Ellieslaw in the evening.

'It is singular,' said Mareschal to Ratcliffe, 'that four horsemen and a female prisoner should have passed through the country without leaving the slightest trace of their passage. One would think they had traversed the air or sunk through the ground.'

'Men may often,' answered Ratcliffe, 'arrive at the knowledge of that which *is* from discovering that which is *not*. We have now scoured every road, path, and track leading from the castle, in all the various points of the compass, saving only that intricate and difficult pass which leads southward down the Westburn and through the morasses.'

'And why have we not examined that?' said Mareschal.

'O, Mr. Vere can best answer that question,' replied his companion, drily.

'Then I will ask it instantly,' said Mareschal; and addressing Mr. Vere, 'I am informed, sir,' said he, 'there is a path we have not examined, leading by Westburnflat.'

'O,' said Sir Frederick, laughing, 'we know the owner of Westburnflat well — a wild lad, that knows little difference between his neighbour's goods and his own; but, withal, very honest to his principles. He would disturb nothing belonging to Ellieslaw.'

'Besides,' said Mr. Vere, smiling mysteriously, 'he had other tow on his distaff last night. Have you not heard young Elliot of the Heughfoot has had his house burnt and his cattle driven away, because he refused to give up his arms to some honest men that think of starting for the king?'

The company smiled upon each other, as at hearing of an exploit which favoured their own views.

'Yet, nevertheless,' resumed Mareschal, 'I think we ought to ride in this direction also, otherwise we shall certainly be blamed for our negligence.'

No reasonable objection could be offered to this proposal, and the party turned their horses' heads towards Westburnflat.

They had not proceeded very far in that direction when the trampling of horses was heard, and a small body of riders were perceived advancing to meet them.

'There comes Earnscliff,' said Mareschal; 'I know his bright bay with the star in his front.'

'And there is my daughter along with him,' exclaimed Vere, furiously. 'Who shall call my suspicions false or injurious now? Gentlemen, friends, lend me the assistance of your swords for the recovery of my child.'

He unsheathed his weapon, and was imitated by Sir Frederick and several of the party, who prepared to charge those that were advancing towards them. But the greater part hesitated.

'They come to us in all peace and security,' said Mareschal Wells; 'let us first hear what account they give us of this mysterious affair. If Miss Vere [illegible] sustained the slightest insult or injury from Earnscliff I will be first to revenge her; but let us hear what they say.'

'You do me wrong by your suspicions, Mareschal,' continued Vere; 'you are the last I would have [illegible] express them.'

'You injure yourself, Ellieslaw, by your violence, though the cause may excuse it.'

He then advanced a little before the rest, and called out with a loud voice — 'Stand, Mr. Earnscliff; or do you and Miss Vere advance alone to meet us. You are charged with having carried that lady off from her father's house; and we are here in arms to shed our best blood for her recovery, and for bringing to justice those who have injured her.'

'And who would do that more willingly than I, Mr. Mareschal?' said Earnscliff, haughtily — 'than I, who had the satisfaction this morning to liberate her from the dungeon in which I found her confined, and who am now escorting her back to the Castle of Ellieslaw?'

'Is this so, Miss Vere?' said Mareschal.

'It is,' answered Isabella, eagerly — 'it is so; for Heaven's

sake, sheathe your swords. I will swear by all that is sacred that I was carried off by ruffians, whose persons and object were alike unknown to me, and am now restored to freedom by means of this gentleman's gallant interference.'

'By whom, and wherefore, could this have been done?' pursued Mareschal. 'Had you no knowledge of the place to which you were conveyed? Earnscliff, where did you find this lady?'

But ere either question could be answered Ellieslaw advanced and, returning his sword to the scabbard, cut short the conference.

'When I know,' he said, 'exactly how much I owe to Mr. Earnscliff, he may rely on suitable acknowledgments; meantime,' taking the bridle of Miss Vere's horse, 'thus far I thank him for replacing my daughter in the power of her natural guardian.'

A sullen bend of the head was returned by Earnscliff with equal haughtiness; and Ellieslaw, turning back with his daughter upon the road to his own house, appeared engaged with her in a conference so earnest that the rest of the company judged it improper to intrude by approaching them too nearly. In the meantime Earnscliff, as he took leave of the other gentlemen belonging to Ellieslaw's party, said aloud, 'Although I am unconscious of any circumstance in my conduct that can authorise such a suspicion, I cannot but observe that Mr. Vere seems to believe that I have had some hand in the atrocious violence which has been offered to his daughter. I request you, gentlemen, to take notice of my explicit denial of a charge so dishonourable; and that, although I can pardon the bewildering feelings of a father in such a moment, yet, if any other gentleman (he looked hard at Sir Frederick Langley) thinks my word and that of Miss Vere, with the evidence of my friends who accompany me, too slight for my exculpation, I will be happy, most happy, to repel the charge as becomes a man who counts his honour dearer than his life.'

'And I'll be his second,' said Simon of Hackburn, 'and take up ony twa o' ye, gentle or semple, laird or loon; it's a' ane to Simon.'

'Who is that rough-looking fellow?' said Sir Frederick Langley, 'and what has he to do with the quarrels of gentlemen?'

'I'se be a lad frae the Hie Te'iot,' said Simon, 'and I'se quarrel wi' ony body I like, except the king or the laird I live under.'

'Come,' said Mareschal, 'let us have no brawls. Mr. Earnscliff, although we do not think alike in some things, I trust we may be opponents, even enemies, if fortune will have it so, without losing our respect for birth, fair-play, and each other. I believe you as innocent of this matter as I am myself; and I will pledge myself that my cousin Ellieslaw, as soon as the perplexity attending these sudden events has left his judgment to its free exercise, shall handsomely acknowledge the very important service you have this day rendered him.'

'To have served your cousin is a sufficient reward in itself. Good evening, gentlemen,' continued Earnscliff, 'I see most of your party are already on their way to Ellieslaw.'

Then saluting Mareschal with courtesy and the rest of the party with indifference, Earnscliff turned his horse and rode towards the Heughfoot, to concert measures with Hobbie Elliot for farther researches after his bride, of whose restoration to her friends he was still ignorant.

'There he goes,' said Mareschal; 'he is a fine, gallant young fellow, upon my soul; and yet I should like well to have a thrust with him on the green turf. I was reckoned at college nearly his equal with the foils, and I should like to try him at sharps in a gentleman-like way.'

'In my opinion,' answered Sir Frederick Langley, 'we have done very ill in having suffered him and those men who are with him to go off without taking away their arms; for the Whigs are very likely to draw to a head under such a sprightly young fellow as that.'

'For shame, Sir Frederick!' exclaimed Mareschal. 'Do you think that Ellieslaw could in honour consent to any violence being offered to Earnscliff, when he entered his bounds only to bring back his daughter? or, if he were to be of your opinion, do you think that I, and the rest of these gentlemen, would disgrace ourselves by assisting in such a transaction? No, no, fair play and auld Scotland for ever! When the sword is drawn I will be as ready to use it as any man; but while it is in the sheath let us behave like gentlemen and neighbours.'

Soon after this colloquy they reached the castle, when Ellieslaw, who had been arrived a few minutes before, met them in the courtyard.

'How is Miss Vere? and have you learned the cause of her being carried off?' asked Mareschal, hastily.

'She is retired to her apartment greatly fatigued; and I cannot expect much light upon her adventure till her spirits

are somewhat recr .ited,' replied her father. 'She and I were not the less obliged to you, Mareschal, and to my other friends, for their kind inquiries. But I must suppress the father's feelings for a while to give myself ' o to those of the patriot. You know this is the day fixed for our final decision; time presses, our friends are arriving, and I have opened house not only for the gentry, but for the under spur-leathers whom we must necessarily employ. We have, therefore, little time to prepare to meet them. Look over these lists, Marchie (an abbreviation by which Mareschal Wells was known among his friends). Do you, Sir Frederick, read these letters from Lothian and the west; all is ripe for the sickle, and we have but to summon out the reapers.'

'With all my heart,' said Mareschal; 'the more mischief the better sport.'

Sir Frederick looked grave and disconcerted.

'Walk aside with me, my good friend,' said Ellieslaw to the sombre baronet; 'I have something for your private ear, with which I know you will be gratified.'

They walked into the house, leaving Ratcliffe and Mareschal standing together in the court.

'And so,' said Ratcliffe, 'the gentlemen of your political persuasion think the downfall of this government so certain that they disdain even to throw a decent disguise over the machinations of their party?'

'Faith, Mr. Ratcliffe,' answered Mareschal, 'the actions and sentiments of *your* friends may require to be veiled, but I am better pleased that ours can go bare-faced.'

'And is it possible,' continued Ratcliffe, 'that you, who, notwithstanding your thoughtlessness and heat of temper — I beg pardon, Mr. Mareschal, I am a plain man — that you, who, notwithstanding these constitutional defects, possess natural good sense and acquired information, should be infatuated enough to embroil yourself in such desperate proceedings? How does your head feel when you are engaged in these dangerous conferences?'

'Not quite so secure on my shoulders,' answered Mareschal, 'as if I were talking of hunting and hawking. I am not of so indifferent a mould as my cousin Ellieslaw, who speaks treason as if it were a child's nursery rhymes, and loses and recovers that sweet girl, his daughter, with a good deal less emotion on both occasions than would have affected me had I lost and recovered a greyhound puppy. My temper is not quite so

inflexible, nor my hate against government so inveterate, as to blind me to the full danger of the attempt.'

'Then why involve yourself in it?' said Ratcliffe.

'Why, I love this poor exiled king with all my heart; and my father was an old Killiecrankie man, and I long to see some amends on the Unionists and courtiers that have bought and sold old Scotland, whose crown has been so long independent.'

'And for the sake of these shadows,' said his monitor, 'you are going to involve your country in war and yourself in trouble?'

'*I* involve? No! but, trouble for trouble, I had rather it came to-morrow than a month hence. *Come*, I know it will; and, as your country folks say, better soon than syne, it will never find me younger; and as for hanging, as Sir John Falstaff says, "I can become a gallows as well as another." You know the end of the old ballad?[1] —

'Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he,
He play'd a spring and danced it round,
Below the gallows tree.'

'Mr. Mareschal, I am sorry for you,' said his grave adviser.

'I am obliged to you, Mr. Ratcliffe; but I would not have you judge of our enterprise by my way of vindicating it; there are wiser heads than mine at the work.'

'Wiser heads than yours may lie as low,' said Ratcliffe, in a warning tone.

'Perhaps so; but no lighter heart shall; and, to prevent it being made heavier by your remonstrances, I will bid you adieu, Mr. Ratcliffe, till dinner-time, when you shall see that my apprehensions have not spoiled my appetite.'

[1] See Macpherson's Rant. Note 8.

CHAPTER XIII

To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour, that may please the eye
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
Of hurlyburly innovation.

Henry IV. Part II.

THERE had been great preparations made at Ellieslaw Castle for the entertainment on this important day, when not only the gentlemen of note in the neighbourhood attached to the Jacobite interest were expected to rendezvous, but also many subordinate malcontents, whom difficulty of circumstances, love of change, resentment against England, or any of the numerous causes which inflamed men's passions at the time, rendered apt to join in perilous enterprise. The men of rank and substance were not many in number; for almost all the large proprietors stood aloof, and most of the smaller gentry and yeomanry were of the Presbyterian persuasion, and therefore, however displeased with the Union, unwilling to engage in a Jacobite conspiracy. But there were some gentlemen of property who, either from early principle, from religious motives, or sharing the ambitious views of Ellieslaw, had given countenance to his scheme; and there were also some young fiery men, like Mareschal, desirous of signalising themselves by engaging in a dangerous enterprise, by which they hoped to vindicate the independence of their country. The other members of the party were persons of inferior rank and desperate fortunes, who were now ready to rise in that part of the country, as they did afterwards in the year 1715, under Forster and Derwentwater, when a troop, commanded by a Border gentleman named Douglas, consisted almost entirely of freebooters, among whom the notorious Luck-in-a-Bag,[1] as he was called, held a distinguished command. We think it necessary to

[1] See Note 9.

mention these particulars, applicable solely to the province in which our scene lies; because, unquestionably, the Jacobite party in the other parts of the kingdom consisted of much more formidable, as well as much more respectable, materials.

One long table extended itself down the ample hall of Ellieslaw Castle, which was still left much in the state in which it had been one hundred years before, stretching, that is, in gloomy length along the whole side of the castle, vaulted with ribbed arches of freestone, the groins of which sprung from projecting figures, that, carved into all the wild forms which the fantastic imagination of a Gothic architect could devise, grinned, frowned, and gnashed their tusks at the assembly below. Long narrow windows lighted the banqueting-room on both sides, filled up with stained glass, through which the sun emitted a dusky and discoloured light. A banner which tradition averred to have been taken from the English at the battle of Sark waved over the chair in which Ellieslaw presided, as if to inflame the courage of the guests by reminding them of ancient victories over their neighbours. He himself, a portly figure, dressed on this occasion with uncommon care, and with features which, though of a stern and sinister expression, might well be termed handsome, looked the old feudal baron extremely well. Sir Frederick Langley was placed on his right hand, and Mr. Mareschal of Mareschal Wells on his left. Some gentlemen of consideration, with their sons, brothers, and nephews, were seated at the upper end of the table, and among these Mr. Ratcliffe had his place. Beneath the salt-cellar (a massive piece of plate which occupied the midst of the table) sate the *sine nomine turba*, men whose vanity was gratified by holding even this subordinate space at the social board, while the distinction observed in ranking them was a salvo to the pride of their superiors. That the lower house was not very select must be admitted, since Willie of Westburnflat was one of the party. The unabashed audacity of this fellow, in daring to present himself in the house of a gentleman to whom he had just offered so flagrant an insult, can only be accounted for by supposing him conscious that his share in carrying off Miss Vere was a secret safe in her possession and that of her father.

Before this numerous and miscellaneous party was placed a dinner, consisting, not indeed of the delicacies of the season, as the newspapers express it, but of viands ample, solid, and sumptuous, under which the very board groaned. But the

mirth was not in proportion to the good cheer. The guests at the lower end of the table were for some time chilled by constraint and respect on finding themselves members of so august an assembly; and were impressed with those feelings of awe by which P. P., clerk of the parish, describes himself as overwhelmed when he first uplifted the psalm in presence of those persons of high worship, the wise Mr. Justice Freeman, the good Lady Jones, and the great Sir Thomas Truby. This ceremonious frost, however, soon gave way before the incentives to merriment, which were liberally supplied, and as liberally consumed by the guests of the lower description. They became talkative, loud, and even clamorous in their mirth.

But it was not in the power of wine or brandy to elevate the spirits of those who held the higher places at the banquet. They experienced the chilling revulsion of spirits which often takes place when men are called upon to take a desperate resolution, after having placed themselves in circumstances where it is alike difficult to advance or to recede. The precipice looked deeper and more dangerous as they approached the brink, and each waited with an inward emotion of awe, expecting which of his confederates would set the example by plunging himself down. This inward sensation of fear and reluctance acted differently, according to the various habits and characters of the company. One looked grave; another looked silly; a third gazed with apprehension on the empty seats at the higher end of the table, designed for members of the conspiracy whose prudence had prevailed over their political zeal, and who had absented themselves from their consultations at this critical period; and some seemed to be reckoning up in their minds the comparative rank and prospects of those who were present and absent. Sir Frederick Langley was reserved, moody, and discontented. Ellieslaw himself made such forced efforts to raise the spirits of the company as plainly marked the flagging of his own. Ratcliffe watched the scene with the composure of a vigilant but uninterested spectator. Mareschal alone, true to the thoughtless vivacity of his character, eat and drank, laughed and jested, and seemed even to find amusement in the embarrassment of the company.

'What has damped our noble courage this morning?' he exclaimed. 'We seem to be met at a funeral, where the chief mourners must not speak above their breath, while the mutes and the saulies (looking to the lower end of the table) are carousing below. Ellieslaw, when will you *lift?* where sleeps

your spirit, man? and what has quelled the high hope of the Knight of Langley Dale?'

'You speak like a madman,' said Ellieslaw; 'do you not see how many are absent?'

'And what of that?' said Mareschal. 'Did you not know before that one-half of the world are better talkers than doers? For my part, I am much encouraged by seeing at least two-thirds of our friends true to the rendezvous, though I suspect one-half of these came to secure the dinner in case of the worst.'

'There is no news from the coast which can amount to certainty of the King's arrival,' said another of the company, in that tone of subdued and tremulous whisper which implies a failure of resolution.

'Not a line from the Earl of D——, nor a single gentleman from the southern side of the Border,' said a third.

'Who is he that wishes for more men from England,' exclaimed Mareschal, in a theatrical tone of affected heroism,

> 'My cousin Ellieslaw? No, my fair cousin,
> If we are doom'd to die ——'

'For God's sake,' said Ellieslaw, 'spare us your folly at present, Mareschal.'

'Well, then,' said his kinsman, 'I 'll bestow my wisdom upon you instead, such as it is. If we have gone forward like fools, do not let us go back like cowards. We have done enough to draw upon us both the suspicion and vengeance of the government; do not let us give up before we have done something to deserve it. What, will no one speak? Then I 'll leap the ditch the first.' And, starting up, he filled a beer-glass to the brim with claret, and, waving his hand, commanded all to follow his example and to rise up from their seats. All obeyed, the more qualified guests as if passively, the others with enthusiasm. 'Then, my friends, I give you the pledge of the day — The independence of Scotland, and the health of our lawful sovereign, King James VIII., now landed in Lothian, and, as I trust and believe, in full possession of his ancient capital!'

He quaffed off the wine and threw the glass over his head.

'It should never,' he said, 'be profaned by a meaner toast.'

All followed his example, and, amid the crash of glasses and the shouts of the company, pledged themselves to stand or fall with the principles and political interest which their toast expressed.

'You have leaped the ditch with a witness,' said Ellieslaw, apart to Mareschal; 'but I believe it is all for the best; at all events we cannot now retreat from our undertaking. One man alone (looking at Ratcliffe) has refused the pledge; but of that by and by.'

Then, rising up, he addressed the company in a style of inflammatory invective against the government and its measures, but especially the Union; a treaty by means of which, he affirmed, Scotland had been at once cheated of her independence, her commerce, and her honour, and laid as a fettered slave at the foot of the rival against whom, through such a length of ages, through so many dangers, and by so much blood, she had honourably defended her rights. This was touching a theme which found a responsive chord in the bosom of every man present.

'Our commerce is destroyed,' hallooed old John Rewcastle, a Jedburgh smuggler, from the lower end of the table.

'Our agriculture is ruined,' said the Laird of Broken-girthflow, a territory which, since the days of Adam, had borne nothing but ling and whor'le-berries.

'Our religion is cut up, root and branch,' said the pimple-nosed pastor of the Episcopal meeting-house at Kirkwhistle.

'We shall shortly neither dare shoot a deer nor kiss a wench without a certificate from the presbytery and kirk-treasurer,' said Mareschal Wells.

'Or make a brandy jeroboam in a frosty morning without license from a commissioner of excise,' said the smuggler.

'Or ride over the fell in a moonless night,' said Westburnflat, 'without asking leave of young Earnscliff or some Englified justice of the peace. Thae were gude days on the Border when there was neither peace nor justice heard of.'

'Let us remember our wrongs at Darien and Glencoe,' continued Ellieslaw, 'and take arms for the protection of our rights, our fortunes, our lives, and our families.'

'Think upon genuine Episcopal ordination, without which there can be no lawful clergy,' said the divine.

'Think of the piracies committed on our East-Indian trade by Green[1] and the English thieves,' said William Willieson, half-owner and sole skipper of a brig that made four voyages annually between Cockpool and Whitehaven.

'Remember your liberties,' rejoined Mareschal, who seemed to take a mischievous delight in precipitating the movements

[1] See Note 10.

of the enthusiasm which he had excited, like a roguish boy who, having lifted the sluice of a mill-dam, enjoys the clatter of the wheels which he has put in motion, without thinking of the mischief he may have occasioned—'remember your liberties,' he exclaimed; 'confound cess, press, and presbytery, and the memory of old Willie that first brought them upon us!'

'Damn the gauger!' echoed old John Rewcastle; 'I'll cleave him wi' my ain hand.'

'And confound the country keeper and the constable!' re-echoed Westburnflat; 'I'll weize a brace of balls through them before morning.'

'We are agreed then,' said Ellieslaw, when the shouts had somewhat subsided, 'to bear this state of things no longer?'

'We are agreed to a man,' answered his guests.

'Not literally so,' said Mr. Ratcliffe; 'for, though I cannot hope to assuage the violent symptoms which seem so suddenly to have seized upon the company, yet I beg to observe that, so far as the opinion of a single member goes, I do not entirely coincide in the list of grievances which has been announced, and that I do utterly protest against the frantic measures which you seem disposed to adopt for removing them. I can easily suppose much of what has been spoken may have arisen out of the heat of the moment, or have been said perhaps in jest. But there are some jests of a nature very apt to transpire; and you ought to remember, gentlemen, that stone walls have ears.'

'Stone walls may have ears,' returned Ellieslaw, eyeing him with a look of triumphant malignity, 'but domestic spies, Mr. Ratcliffe, will soon find themselves without any, if any such dares to continue his abode in a family where his coming was an unauthorised intrusion, where his conduct has been that of a presumptuous meddler, and from which his exit shall be that of a baffled knave, if he does not know how to take a hint.'

'Mr. Vere,' returned Ratcliffe, with calm contempt, 'I am fully aware that, as soon as my presence becomes useless to you, which it must through the rash step you are about to adopt, it will immediately become unsafe to myself, as it has always been hateful to you. But I have one protection, and it is a strong one; for you would not willingly hear me detail before gentlemen and men of honour the singular circumstances in which our connexion took its rise. As to the rest, I rejoice at its con-

clusion; and, as I think that Mr. Mareschal and some other gentlemen will guarantee the safety of my ears and of my throat — for which last I have more reason to be apprehensive — during the course of the night, I shall not leave your castle till to-morrow morning.'

'Be it so, sir,' replied Mr. Vere; 'you are entirely safe from my resentment, because you are beneath it, and not because I am afraid of your disclosing any family secrets, although, for your own sake, I warn you to beware how you do so. Your agency and intermediation can be of little consequence to one who will win or lose all, as lawful right or unjust usurpation shall succeed in the struggle that is about to ensue. Farewell, sir.'

Ratcliffe arose and cast upon him a look, which Vere seemed to sustain with difficulty, and, bowing to those around him, left the room.

This conversation made an impression on many of the company, which Ellieslaw hastened to dispel by entering upon the business of the day. Their hasty deliberations went to organise an immediate insurrection. Ellieslaw, Mareschal, and Sir Frederick Langley were chosen leaders, with powers to direct their farther measures. A place of rendezvous was appointed, at which all agreed to meet early on the ensuing day, with such followers and friends to the cause as each could collect around him. Several of the guests retired to make the necessary preparations; and Ellieslaw made a formal apology to the others, who, with Westburnflat and the old smuggler, continued to ply the bottle stanchly, for leaving the head of the table, as he must necessarily hold a separate and sober conference with the coadjutors whom they had associated with him in the command. The apology was the more readily accepted as he prayed them, at the same time, to continue to amuse themselves with such refreshments as the cellars of the castle afforded. Shouts of applause followed their retreat; and the names of Vere, Langley, and, above all, of Mareschal, were thundered forth in chorus, and bathed with copious bumpers repeatedly, during the remainder of the evening.

When the principal conspirators had retired into a separate apartment, they gazed on each other for a minute with a sort of embarrassment, which in Sir Frederick's dark features amounted to an expression of discontented sullenness. Mareschal was the first to break the pause, saying, with a loud burst of laughter — 'Well! we are fairly embarked now, gentlemen; *cogue la galère!*'

'We may thank you for the plunge,' said Ellieslaw.

'Yes; but I don't know how far you will thank me,' answered Mareschal, 'when I show you this letter which I received just before we sat down. My servant told me it was delivered by a man he had never seen before, who went off at the gallop, after charging him to put it into my own hand.'

Ellieslaw impatiently opened the letter and read aloud —

'EDINBURGH, —

'HOND. SIR,

'Having obligations to your family, which shall be nameless, and learning that you are one of the company of adventurers doing business for the house of James and Company, late merchants in London, now in Dunkirk, I think it right to send you this early and private information that the vessels you expected have been driven off the coast, without having been able to break bulk or to land any part of their cargo; and that the west-country partners have resolved to withdraw their name from the firm, as it must prove a losing concern. Having good hope you will avail yourself of this early information to do what is needful for your own security, I rest your humble servant,

'NIHIL NAMELESS.

'For RALPH MARESCHAL of Mareschal Wells
These, with care and speed.'

Sir Frederick's jaw dropped and his countenance blackened as the letter was read, and Ellieslaw exclaimed, 'Why, this affects the very mainspring of our enterprise. If the French fleet, with the King on board, has been chased off by the English, as this d—d scrawl seems to intimate, where are we?'[1]

'Just where we were this morning, I think,' said Mareschal, still laughing.

'Pardon me, and a truce to your ill-timed mirth, Mr. Mareschal: this morning we were not committed publicly, as we now stand committed by your own mad act, when you had a letter in your pocket apprising you that our undertaking was desperate.'

'Ay, ay, I expected you would say so. But, in the first place, my friend Nihil Nameless and his letter may be all a flam: and, moreover, I would have you know that I am tired of a party that does nothing but form bold resolutions over

[1] See The Pretender's Descent upon Scotland. Note 11.

night, and sleep them away with their wine before morning. The government are now unprovided of men and ammunition; in a few weeks they will have enough of both. The country is now in a flame against them; in a few weeks, betwixt the effects of self-interest, of fear, and of lukewarm indifference, which are already so visible, this first fervour will be as cold as Christmas. So, as I was determined to go the vole, I have taken care you shall dip as deep as I. It signifies nothing plunging: you are fairly in the bog, and must struggle through.'

'You are mistaken with respect to one of us, Mr. Mareschal,' said Sir Frederick Langley; and, applying himself to the bell, he desired the person who entered to order his servants and horses instantly.

'You must not leave us, Sir Frederick,' said Ellieslaw; 'we have our musters to go over.'

'I will go to-night, Mr. Vere,' said Sir Frederick, 'and write you my intentions in this matter when I am at home.'

'Ay,' said Mareschal, 'and send them by a troop of horse from Carlisle to make us prisoners? Look ye, Sir Frederick, I for one will neither be deserted nor betrayed; and if you leave Ellieslaw Castle to-night, it shall be by passing over my dead body.'

'For shame! Mareschal,' said Mr. Vere, 'how can you so hastily misinterpret our friend's intentions? I am sure Sir Frederick can only be jesting with us; for, were he not too honourable to dream of deserting the cause, he cannot but remember the full proofs we have of his accession to it and his eager activity in advancing it. He cannot but be conscious, besides, that the first information will be readily received by government, and that, if the question be which can first lodge intelligence of the affair, we can easily save a few hours on him.'

'You should say *you*, and not we, when you talk of priorities in such a race of treachery; for my part, I won't enter my horse for such a plate,' said Mareschal, and added betwixt his teeth, 'A pretty pair of fellows to trust a man's neck with!'

'I am not to be intimidated from doing what I think proper,' said Sir Frederick Langley; 'and my first step shall be to leave Ellieslaw. I have no reason to keep faith with one (looking at Vere) who has kept none with me.'

'In what respect?' said Ellieslaw, silencing with a motion of his hand his impetuous kinsman; 'how have I disappointed you, Sir Frederick?'

'In the nearest and most tender point; you have trifled with me concerning our promised alliance, which you well knew was the gage of our political undertaking. This carrying off and this bringing back of Miss Vere, the cold reception I have met with from her, and the excuses with which you cover it, I believe to be mere evasions, that you may yourself retain possession of the estates which are hers by right, and make me, in the meanwhile, a tool in your desperate enterprise, by holding out hopes and expectations which you are resolved never to realise.'

'Sir Frederick, I protest, by all that is sacred ——'

'I will listen to no protestations; I have been cheated with them too long,' answered Sir Frederick.

'If you leave us,' said Ellieslaw, 'you cannot but know both your ruin and ours is certain; all depends on our adhering together.'

'Leave me to take care of myself,' returned the knight; 'but were what you say true, I would rather perish than be fooled any farther.'

'Can nothing — no surety — convince you of my sincerity?' said Ellieslaw, anxiously. 'This morning I should have repelled your unjust suspicions as an insult; but situated as we now are ——'

'You feel yourself compelled to be sincere?' retorted Sir Frederick. 'If you would have me think so, there is but one way to convince me of it: let your daughter bestow her hand on me this evening.'

'So soon? impossible,' answered Vere. 'Think of her late alarm, of our present undertaking.'

'I will listen to nothing but to her consent, plighted at the altar. You have a chapel in the castle; Doctor Hobbler is present among the company; this proof of your good faith to-night, and we are again joined in heart and hand. If you refuse me when it is so much for your advantage to consent, how shall I trust you to-morrow, when I shall stand committed in your undertaking and unable to retract?'

'And I am to understand that, if you can be made my son-in-law to-night, our friendship is renewed?' said Ellieslaw.

'Most infallibly and most inviolably,' replied Sir Frederick.

'Then,' said Vere, 'though what you ask is premature, indelicate, and unjust towards my character, yet, Sir Frederick, give me your hand; my daughter shall be your wife.'

'This night?'

'This very night,' replied Ellieslaw, 'before the clock strikes twelve.'

'With her own consent, I trust,' said Mareschal; 'for I promise you both, gentlemen, I will not stand tamely by and see any violence put on the will of my pretty kinswoman.'

'Another pest in this hot-headed fellow,' muttered Ellieslaw; and then aloud, 'With her own consent? For what do you take me, Mareschal, that you should suppose your interference necessary to protect my daughter against her father? Depend upon it, she has no repugnance to Sir Frederick Langley.'

'Or rather to be called Lady Langley? Faith, like enough, there are many women might be of her mind; and I beg your pardon, but these sudden demands and concessions alarmed me a little on her account.'

'It is only the suddenness of the proposal that embarrasses me,' said Ellieslaw; 'but perhaps, if she is found intractable, Sir Frederick will consider ——'

'I will consider nothing, Mr. Vere; your daughter's hand to-night, or I depart, were it at midnight — there is my ultimatum.'

'I embrace it,' said Ellieslaw; 'an' I will leave you to talk upon our military preparations, while I go to prepare my daughter for so sudden a change of condition.'

So saying, he left the company.

CHAPTER XIV

He brings Earl Osmond to receive my vows.
O dreadful change! for Tancred, haughty Osmond.

Tancred and Sigismunda.

MR. VERE, whom long practice of dissimulation had enabled to model his very gait and footsteps to aid the purposes of deception, walked along the stone passage and up the first flight of steps towards Miss Vere's apartment with the alert, firm, and steady pace of one who is bound, indeed, upon important business, but who entertains no doubt he can terminate his affairs satisfactorily. But when out of hearing of the gentlemen whom he had left, his step became so slow and irresolute as to correspond with his doubts and his fears. At length he paused in an antechamber to collect his ideas and form his plan of argument before approaching his daughter.

'In what more hopeless and inextricable dilemma was ever an unfortunate man involved!' Such was the tenor of his reflections. 'If we now fall to pieces by disunion, there can be little doubt that the government will take my life as the prime agitator of the insurrection. Or, grant I could stoop to save myself by a hasty submission, am I not, even in that case, utterly ruined? I have broken irreconcilably with Ratcliffe, and can have nothing to expect from that quarter but insult and persecution. I must wander forth an impoverished and dishonoured man, without even the means of sustaining life, far less wealth sufficient to counterbalance the infamy which my countrymen, both those whom in the case supposed I desert and those whom I join, will attach to the name of the political renegade. It is not to be thought of. And yet, what choice remains between this lot and the ignominious scaffold? Nothing can save me but reconciliation with these men; and, to accomplish this, I have promised to Langley that Isabella shall marry him ere midnight, and to Mareschal, that she shall do so with-

out compulsion. I have but one remedy betwixt me and ruin — her consent to take a suitor whom she dislikes, upon such short notice as would disgust her even were he a favoured lover. But I must trust to the romantic generosity of her disposition; and let me paint the necessity of her obedience ever so strongly, I cannot overcharge its reality.'

Having finished this sad chain of reflections upon his perilous condition, he entered his daughter's apartment with every nerve bent up to the support of the argument which he was about to sustain. Though a deceitful and ambitious man, he was not so devoid of natural affection but that he was shocked at the part he was about to act, in practising on the feelings of a dutiful and affectionate child; but the recollections that, if he succeeded, his daughter would only be trepanned into an advantageous match, and that, if he failed, he himself was a lost man, were quite sufficient to drown all scruples.

He found Miss Vere seated by the window of her dressing-room, her head reclining on her hand, and either sunk in slumber or so deeply engaged in meditation that she did not hear the noise he made at his entrance. He approached with his features composed to a deep expression of sorrow and sympathy, and, sitting down beside her, solicited her attention by quietly taking her hand, a motion which he did not fail to accompany with a deep sigh.

'My father!' said Isabella, with a sort of start, which expressed at least as much fear as joy or affection.

'Yes, Isabella,' said Vere, 'your unhappy father, who comes now as a penitent to crave forgiveness of his daughter for an injury done to her in the excess of his affection, and then to take leave of her for ever.'

'Sir! Offence to me! Take leave for ever! What does all this mean?' said Miss Vere.

'Yes, Isabella, I am serious. But first let me ask you, have you no suspicion that I may have been privy to the strange chance which befell you yesterday morning?'

'You, sir?' answered Isabella, stammering between a consciousness that he had guessed her thoughts justly and the shame as well as fear which forbade her to acknowledge a suspicion so degrading and so unnatural.

'Yes,' he continued, 'your hesitation confesses that you entertained such an opinion, and I have now the painful task of acknowledging that your suspicions have done me no injustice. But listen to my motives. In an evil hour I countenanced the

addresses of Sir Frederick Langley, conceiving it impossible that you could have any permanent objections to a match where the advantages were, in most respects, on your side. In a worse, I entered with him into measures calculated to restore our banished monarch and the independence of my country. He has taken advantage of my unguarded confidence, and now has my life at his disposal.'

'Your life, sir?' said Isabella, faintly.

'Yes, Isabella,' continued her father, 'the life of him who gave life to you. So soon as I foresaw the excesses into which his headlong passion — for, to do him justice, I believe his unreasonable conduct arises from excess of attachment to you — was likely to hurry him, I endeavoured, by finding a plausible pretext for your absence for some weeks, to extricate myself from the dilemma in which I am placed. For this purpose I wished, in case your objections to the match continued insurmountable, to have sent you privately for a few months to the convent of your maternal aunt at Paris. By a series of mistakes you have been brought from the place of secrecy and security which I had destined for your temporary abode. Fate has baffled my last chance of escape, and I have only to give you my blessing and send you from the castle with Mr. Ratcliffe, who now leaves it; my own fate will soon be decided.'

'Good Heaven, sir! can this be possible?' exclaimed Isabella. 'O, why was I freed from the restraint in which you placed me? or why did you not impart your pleasure to me?'

'Think an instant, Isabella. Would you have had me prejudice in your opinion the friend I was most desirous of serving, by communicating to you the injurious eagerness with which he pursued his object? Could I do so honourably, having promised to assist his suit? But it is all over. I and Mareschal have made up our minds to die like men; it only remains to send you from hence under a safe escort.'

'Great powers! and is there no remedy?' said the terrified young woman.

'None, my child,' answered Vere, gently, 'unless one which you would not advise your father to adopt — to be the first to betray his friends.'

'O, no! no!' she answered, abhorrently yet hastily, as if to reject the temptation which the alternative presented to her. 'But is there no other hope — through flight, through mediation, through supplication? I will bend my knee to Sir Frederick!'

'It would be a fruitless degradation; he is determined on his course, and I am equally resolved to stand the hazard of my fate. On one condition only he will turn aside from his purpose, and that condition my lips shall never utter to you.'

'Name it, I conjure you, my dear father!' exclaimed Isabella. 'What *can* he ask that we ought not to grant, to prevent the hideous catastrophe with which you are threatened?'

'That, Isabella,' said Vere, solemnly, 'you shall never know until your father's head has rolled on the bloody scaffold; then, indeed, you will learn there was one sacrifice by which he might have been saved.'

'And why not speak it now?' said Isabella; 'do you fear I would flinch from the sacrifice of fortune for your preservation? or would you bequeath me the bitter legacy of life long remorse, so oft as I shall think that you perished while there remained one mode of preventing the dreadful misfortune that overhangs you?'

'Then, my child,' said Vere, 'since you press me to name what I would a thousand times rather leave in silence, I must inform you that he will accept for ransom nothing but your hand in marriage, and that conferred before midnight this very evening!'

'This evening, sir!' said the young lady, struck with horror at the proposal — 'and to such a man! A man? a monster, who could wish to win the daughter by threatening the life of the father; it is impossible!'

'You say right, my child,' answered her father, 'it is indeed impossible; nor have I either the right or the wish to exact such a sacrifice. It is the course of nature that the old should die and be forgot, and the young should live and be happy.'

'My father die, and his child can save him! but no — no my dear father, pardon me, it is impossible; you only wish to guide me to your wishes. I know your object is what you think my happiness, and this dreadful tale is only told to influence my conduct and subdue my scruples.'

'My daughter,' replied Ellieslaw, in a tone where offended authority seemed to struggle with parental affection — 'my child suspects me of inventing a false tale to work upon her feelings! Even this I must bear, and even from this unworthy suspicion I must descend to vindicate myself. You know the stainless honour of your cousin Mareschal; mark what I shall write to him, and judge from his answer if the danger in which we

stand is not real, and whether I have not used every means to avert it.'

He sate down, wrote a few lines hastily and handed them to Isabella, who, after repeated and painful efforts, cleared her eyes and head sufficiently to discern their purport.

'Dear cousin,' said the billet, 'I find my daughter, as I expected, in despair at the untimely and premature urgency of Sir Frederick Langley. She cannot even comprehend the peril in which we stand, or how much we are in his power. Use your influence with him, for Heaven's sake, to modify proposals to the acceptance of which I cannot, and will not, urge my child against all her own feelings, as well as those of delicacy and propriety, and oblige your loving cousin, R. V.'

In the agitation of the moment, when her swimming eyes and dizzy brain could hardly comprehend the sense of what she looked upon, it is not surprising that Miss Vere should have omitted to remark that this letter seemed to rest her scruples rather upon the form and time of the proposed union than on a rooted dislike to the suitor proposed to her. Mr. Vere rang the bell and gave the letter to a servant to be delivered to Mr. Mareschal, and, rising from his chair, continued to traverse the apartment in silence and in great agitation until the answer was returned. He glanced it over, and wrung the hand of his daughter as he gave it to her. The tenor was as follows: —

'My dear Kinsman – I have already urged the knight on the point you mention, and I find him as fixed as Cheviot. I am truly sorry my fair cousin should be pressed to give up any of her maidenly rights. Sir Frederick consents, however, to leave the castle with me the instant the ceremony is performed, and we will raise our followers and begin the fray. Thus there is great hope the bridegroom may be knocked on the head before he and the bride can meet again, so Bell has a fair chance to be Lady Langley *à très bon marché*. For the rest, I can only say that, if she can make up her mind to the alliance at all – it is no time for mere maiden ceremony – my pretty cousin must needs consent to marry in haste, or we shall all repent at leisure, or rather have very little leisure to repent; which is all at present from him who rests your affectionate kinsman,

'R. M.'

'P. S. – Tell Isabella that I would rather cut the knight's throat after all, and end the dilemma that way, than see her constrained to marry him against her will.'

When Isabella had read this letter it dropped from her hand, and she would, at the same time, have fallen from her chair, had she not been supported by her father.

'My God, my child will die!' exclaimed Vere, the feelings of nature overcoming, even in *his* breast, the sentiments of selfish policy; 'look up, Isabella — look up, my child; come what will, you shall not be the sacrifice. I will fall myself with the consciousness I leave you happy. My child may weep on my grave, but she shall not — not in this instance — reproach my memory.' He called a servant. 'Go, bid Ratcliffe come hither directly.'

During this interval Miss Vere became deadly pale, clenched her hands, pressing the palms strongly together, closed her eyes, and drew her lips with strong compression, as if the severe constraint which she put upon her internal feelings extended even to her muscular organisation. Then raising her head and drawing in her breath strongly ere she spoke, she said, with firmness, 'Father, I consent to the marriage.'

'You shall not — you shall not; my child — my dear child, you shall not embrace certain misery to free me from uncertain danger.' So exclaimed Ellieslaw; and, strange and inconsistent beings that we are! he expressed the real though momentary feelings of his heart.

'Father,' repeated Isabella, 'I will consent to this marriage.'

'No, my child, no; not now at least. We will humble ourselves to obtain delay from him; and yet, Isabella, could you overcome a dislike which has no real foundation, think, in other respects, what a match! — wealth, rank, importance.'

'Father!' reiterated Isabella, 'I have consented.'

It seemed as if she had lost the power of saying anything else, or even of varying the phrase which, with such effort, she had compelled herself to utter.

'Heaven bless thee, my child! — Heaven bless thee! And it *will* bless thee with riches, with pleasure, with power.'

Miss Vere faintly entreated to be left by herself for the rest of the evening.

'But will you not receive Sir Frederick?' said her father, anxiously.

'I will meet him,' she replied — 'I will meet him — when I must, and where I must; but spare me now.'

'Be it so, my dearest; you shall know no restraint that I can save you from. Do not think too hardly of Sir Frederick for this; it is an excess of passion.'

Isabella waved her hand impatiently.

'Forgive me, my child; I go. Heaven bless thee! At eleven — if you call me not before — at eleven I come to seek you.'

When he left Isabella she dropped upon her knees. — 'Heaven aid me to support the resolution I have taken, Heaven only can! O, poor Earnscliff! who shall comfort him? and with what contempt will he pronounce her name who listened to him to-day and gave herself to another at night! But let him despise me, better so than that he should know the truth. Let him despise me; if it will but lessen his grief, I should feel comfort in the loss of his esteem.'

She wept bitterly; attempting in vain, from time to time, to commence the prayer for which she had sunk on her knees, but unable to calm her spirits sufficiently for the exercise of devotion. As she remained in this agony of mind the door of her apartment was slowly opened.

CHAPTER XV

The darksome cave they enter, where they found
The woful man, low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind.

Fuërie Queene.

THE intruder on Miss Vere's sorrows was Ratcliffe. Ellieslaw had, in the agitation of his mind, forgotten to countermand the order he had given to call him thither, so that he opened the door with the words, 'You sent for me, Mr. Vere.' Then looking around — 'Miss Vere, alone! on the ground! and in tears!'

'Leave me — leave me, Mr. Ratcliffe,' said the unhappy young lady.

'I must not leave you,' said Ratcliffe; 'I have been repeatedly requesting admittance to take my leave of you, and have been refused, until your father himself sent for me. Blame me not if I am bold and intrusive; I have a duty to discharge which makes me so.'

'I cannot listen to you, I cannot speak to you, Mr. Ratcliffe; take my best wishes, and for God's sake leave me.'

'Tell me only,' said Ratcliffe, 'is it true that this monstrous match is to go forward, and this very [illegible] I heard the servants proclaim it as I was on the great [illegible]se; I heard the directions given to clear out the chapel.

'Spare me, Mr. Ratcliffe,' replied the luckless bride; 'and, from the state in which you see me, judge of the cruelty of these questions.'

'Married! to Sir Frederick Langley! and this night! It must not — cannot — shall not be.'

'It *must* be, Mr. Ratcliffe, or my father is ruined.'

'Ah! I understand,' answered Ratcliffe; 'and you have sacrificed yourself to save him who —— But let the virtue of the child atone for the faults of the fa[illegible]r; it is no time to rake them up. What *can* be done? Time presses. I know but

one remedy; with four-and-twenty hours I might find many. Miss Vere, you must implore the protection of the only human being who has it in his power to control the course of events which threatens to hurry you before it.'

'And what human being,' answered Miss Vere, 'has such power?'

'Start not when I name him,' said Ratcliffe, coming near her, and speaking in a low but distinct voice. 'It is he who is called Elshender, the Recluse of Mucklestane Moor.'

'You are mad, Mr. Ratcliffe, or you mean to insult my misery by an ill-timed jest!'

'I am as much in my senses, young lady,' answered her adviser, 'as you are; and I am no idle jester, far less with misery, least of all with your misery. I swear to you that this being, who is other far than what he seems, actually possesses the means of redeeming you from this hateful union.'

'And of ensuring my father's safety?'

'Yes! even that,' said Ratcliffe, 'if you plead his cause with him. Yet how to obtain admittance to the Recluse!'

'Fear not that,' said Miss Vere, suddenly recollecting the incident of the rose; 'I remember he desired me to call upon him for aid in my extremity, and gave me this flower as a token. Ere it faded away entirely, I would need, he said, his assistance; is it possible his words can have been aught but the ravings of insanity?'

'Doubt it not, fear it not; but above all,' said Ratcliffe, 'let us lose no time. Are you at liberty and unwatched?'

'I believe so,' said Isabella; 'but what would you have me to do?'

'Leave the castle instantly,' said Ratcliffe, 'and throw yourself at the feet of this extraordinary man, who, in circumstances that seem to argue the extremity of the most contemptible poverty, possesses yet an almost absolute influence over your fate. Guests and servants are deep in their carouse, the leaders sitting in conclave on their treasonable schemes. My horse stands ready in the stable; I will saddle one for you, and meet you at the little garden gate. O, let no doubt of my prudence or fidelity prevent your taking the only step in your power to escape the dreadful fate which must attend the wife of Sir Frederick Langley!'

'Mr. Ratcliffe,' said Miss Vere, 'you have always been esteemed a man of honour and probity. You have maintained, I am sensible, a powerful though mysterious influence over the

destinies of this family. A drowning wretch will always catch at the feeblest twig: I will trust you, I will follow your advice, I will meet you at the garden gate.'

She bolted the outer door of her apartment as soon as Mr. Ratcliffe left her, and descended to the garden by a separate stair of communication which opened to her dressing-room. On the way she felt inclined to retract the consent she had so hastily given to a plan so hopeless and extravagant. But as she passed in her descent a private door which entered into the chapel from the backstair, she heard the voice of the female servants as they were employed in the task of cleaning it.

'Married! [illegible] to sae bad a man. Ewhow, sirs! ony thing rather than that.'

'They are right — they are right,' said Miss Vere; 'anything rather than that!'

She hurried to the garden. Mr. Ratcliffe was true to his appointment: the horses stood saddled at the garden gate, and in a few minutes they were advancing rapidly towards the hut of the Solitary.

While the ground was favourable the speed of their journey was such as to prevent much communication: but when a steep ascent compelled them to slacken their pace, a new cause of apprehension occurred to Miss Vere's mind.

'Mr. Ratcliffe,' she said, pulling up her horse's bridle, 'let us prosecute no farther a journey which nothing but the extreme agitation of my mind can vindicate my having undertaken. I am well aware that this man passes among the vulgar as being possessed of supernatural powers, and carrying on an intercourse with beings of another world; but I would have you aware I am neither to be imposed on by such follies, nor, were I to believe in their existence, durst I, with my feelings of religion, apply to this being in my distress.'

'I should have thought, Miss Vere,' replied Ratcliffe, 'my character and habits of thinking were so well known to you that you might have held me exculpated from crediting in such absurdity.'

'But in what other mode,' said Isabella, 'can a being so miserable himself in appearance possess the power of assisting me?'

'Miss Vere,' said Ratcliffe, after a momentary pause, 'I am bound by a solemn oath of secrecy. You must, without farther explanation, be satisfied with my pledged assurance that he

does possess the power, if you can inspire him with the will; and that, I doubt not, you will be able to do.'

'Mr. Ratcliffe,' said Miss Vere, 'you may yourself be mistaken; you ask an unlimited degree of confidence from me.'

'Recollect, Miss Vere,' he replied, 'that when, in your humanity, you asked me to interfere with your father in favour of Haswell and his ruined family — when you requested me to prevail on him to do a thing most abhorrent to his nature, to forgive an injury and remit a penalty — I stipulated that you should ask me no questions concerning the sources of my influence. You found no reason to distrust me then, do not distrust me now.'

'But the extraordinary mode of life of this man,' said Miss Vere; 'his seclusion, his figure, the deepness of misanthropy which he is said to express in his language. Mr. Ratcliffe, what can I think of him if he really possesses the powers you ascribe to him?'

'This man, young lady, was bred a Catholic, a sect which affords a thousand instances of those who have retired from power and affluence to voluntary privations more strict even than his.'

'But he avows no religious motive,' replied Miss Vere.

'No,' replied Ratcliffe: 'disgust with the world has operated his retreat from it without assuming the veil of superstition. Thus far I may tell you — he was born to great wealth, which his parents designed should become greater by his union with a kinswoman, whom for that purpose they bred up in their own house. You have seen his figure; judge what the young lady must have thought of the lot to which she was destined. Yet, habituated to his appearance, she showed no reluctance, and the friends of — of the person whom I speak of, doubted not that the excess of his attachment, the various acquisiti- of his mind, his many and amiable qualities, had overcome the natural horror which his destined bride must have entertained at an exterior so dreadfully inauspicious.'

'And did they judge truly?' said Isabella.

'You shall hear. He, at least, was fully aware of his own deficiency; the sense of it haunted him like a phantom. "I am," was his own expression to me — I mean to a man whom he trusted — "I am, in spite of what you would say, a poor miserable outcast, fitter to have been smothered in the cradle than to have been brought up to scare the world in which I crawl." The person whom he addressed in vain endeavoured

to impress him with the indifference to external form which is the natural result of philosophy, or entreat him to recall the superiority of mental talents to the more attractive attributes that are merely personal. "I hear you," he would reply; "but you speak the voice of cold-blooded stoicism, or, at least, of friendly partiality. But look at every book which we have read, those excepted of that abstract philosophy which feels no responsive voice in our natural feelings. Is not personal form, such as at least can be tolerated without horror and disgust, always represented as essential to our ideas of a friend, far more a lover? Is not such a misshapen monster as I am excluded, by the very fiat of Nature, from her fairest enjoyments? What but my wealth prevents all — perhaps even Letitia or you — from shunning me as something foreign to your nature, and more odious by bearing that distorted resemblance to humanity which we observe in the animal tribes that are more hateful to man because they seem his caricature?"'

'You repeat the sentiments of a madman,' said Miss Vere.

'No,' replied her conductor, 'unless a morbid and excessive sensibility on such a subject can be termed insanity. Yet I will not deny that this governing feeling and apprehension carried the person who entertained it to lengths which indicated a deranged imagination. He appeared to think that it was necessary for him, by exuberant and not always well-chosen instances of liberality, and even profusion, to unite himself to the human race, from which he conceived himself naturally dissevered. The benefits which he bestowed, from a disposition naturally philanthropical in an uncommon degree, were exaggerated by the influence of the goading reflection that more was necessary from him than from others — lavishing his treasures as if to bribe mankind to receive him into their class. It is scarcely necessary to say that the bounty which flowed from a source so capricious was often abused, and his confidence frequently betrayed. These disappointments, which occur to all, more or less, and most to such as confer benefits without just discrimination, his diseased fancy set down to the hatred and contempt excited by his personal deformity. But I fatigue you, Miss Vere?'

'No, by no means; I — I could not prevent my attention from wandering an instant; pray proceed.'

'He became at length,' continued Ratcliffe, 'the most ingenious self-tormentor of whom I have ever heard; the scoff of

the rabble, and the sneer of the yet more brutal vulgar of his own rank, was to him agony and breaking on the wheel. He regarded the laugh of the common people whom he passed on the street, and the suppressed titter, or yet more offensive terror, of the young girls to whom he was introduced in company, as proofs of the true sense which the world entertained of him, as a prodigy unfit to be received among them on the usual terms of society, and as vindicating the wisdom of his purpose in withdrawing himself from among them. On the faith and sincerity of two persons alone he seemed to rely implicitly — on that of his betrothed bride and of a friend eminently gifted in personal accomplishments, who seemed, and indeed probably was, sincerely attached to him. He ought to have been so at least, for he was literally loaded with benefits by him whom you are now about to see. The parents of the subject of my story died within a short space of each other. Their death postponed the marriage, for which the day had been fixed. The lady did not seem greatly to mourn this delay, perhaps that was not to have been expected; but she intimated no change of intention when, after a decent interval, a second day was named for their union. The friend of whom I spoke was then a constant resident at the Hall. In an evil hour, at the earnest request and entreaty of this friend, they joined a general party, where men of different political opinions were mingled, and where they drank deep. A quarrel ensued; the friend of the Recluse drew his sword with others, and was thrown down and disarmed by a more powerful antagonist. They fell in the struggle at the feet of the Recluse, who, maimed and truncated as his form appears, possesses, nevertheless, great strength, as well as violent passions. He caught up a sword, pierced the heart of his friend's antagonist, was tried, and his life, with difficulty, redeemed from justice at the expense of a year's close imprisonment, the punishment of manslaughter. The incident affected him most deeply, the more that the deceased was a man of excellent character, and had sustained gross insult and injury ere he drew his sword. I think, from that moment, I observed — I beg pardon — the fits of mo bid sensibility which had tormented this unfortunate gentleman were rendered henceforth more acute by remorse, which he, of all men, was least capable of having incurred, or of sustaining when it became his unhappy lot. His paroxysms of agony could not be concealed from the lady to whom he was betrothed; and it must be confessed they were of an alarming and fearful nature. He

comforted himself that, at the expiry of his imprisonment, he could form with his wife and friend a society, encircled by which he might dispense with more extensive communication with the world. He was deceived; before that term elapsed his friend and his betrothed bride were man and wife. The effects of a shock so dreadful on an ardent temperament, a disposition already soured by bitter remorse, and loosened by the indulgence of a gloomy imagination from the rest of mankind, I cannot describe to you; it was as if the last cable at which the vessel rode had suddenly parted, and left her abandoned to all the wild fury of the tempest. He was placed under medical restraint as a lunatic. As a temporary measure this might have been justifiable; but his hard-hearted friend, who, in consequence of his marriage, was now his nearest ally, prolonged his confinement in order to enjoy the management of his immense estates. There was one who owed his all to the sufferer, an humble friend, but grateful and faithful. By unceasing exertion and repeated invocation of justice, he at length succeeded in obtaining his patron's freedom and reinstatement in the management of his own property, to which was soon added that of his intended bride, who having died without male issue, her estates reverted to him, as heir of entail. But freedom and wealth were unable to restore the equipoise of his mind: to the former his grief made him indifferent; the latter only served him as far as it afforded him the means of indulging his strange and wayward fancy. He had renounced the Catholic religion, but perhaps some of its doctrines continued to influence a mind over which remorse and misanthropy now assumed, in appearance, an unbounded authority. His life has since been that alternately of a pilgrim and a hermit, suffering the most severe privations, not indeed in ascetic devotion, but in abhorrence of mankind. Yet no man's words and actions have been at such a wide difference, nor has any hypocritical wretch ever been more ingenious in assigning good motives for his vile actions than this unfortunate in reconciling to his abstract principles of misanthropy a conduct which flows from his natural generosity and kindness of feeling.'

'Still, Mr. Ratcliffe — still you describe the inconsistencies of a madman.'

'By no means,' replied Ratcliffe. 'That the imagination of this gentleman is disordered, I will not pretend to dispute; I have already told you that it has sometimes broken out into paroxysms approaching to real mental alienation. But it is of

his common state of mind that I speak; it is irregular, but not deranged; the shades are as gradual as those that divide the light of noonday from midnight. The courtier who ruins his fortune for the attainment of a title which can do him no good, or power of which he can make no suitable or creditable use, the miser who hoards his useless wealth, and the prodigal who squanders it, are all marked with a certain shade of insanity. To criminals who are guilty of enormities, wher. the temptation, to a sober mind, bears no proportion to the horror of the act, or the probability of detection and punishment, the same observation applies; and every violent passion, as well as anger, may be termed a short madness.'

'This may be all good philosophy, Mr. Ratcliffe,' answered Miss Vere; 'but, excuse me, it by no means emboldens me to visit at this late hour a person whose extravagance of imagination you yourself can only palliate.'

'Rather, then,' said Ratcliffe, 'receive my solemn assurances that you do not incur the slightest danger. But what I have been hitherto afraid to mention for fear of alarming you is, that now when we are within sight of his retreat, for I can discover it through the twilight, I must go no farther with you; you must proceed alone.'

'Alone? I dare not.'

'You must,' continued Ratcliffe. 'I will remain here and wait for you.'

'You will not, then, stir from this place,' said Miss Vere; 'yet the distance is so great, you could not hear me were I to cry for assistance.'

'Fear nothing,' said her guide; 'or observe, at least, the utmost caution in stifling every expression of timidity. Remember that his predominant and most harassing apprehension arises from a consciousness of the hideousness of his appearance. Your path lies straight beside you half-fallen willow; keep the left side of it, the marsh lies on th' 'ght. Farewell for a time. Remember the evil you are threatened with, and let it overcome at once your fears and scruples.'

'Mr. Ratcliffe,' said Isabella, 'farewell; if you have deceived one so unfortunate as myself, you have cruelly wronged her, and for ever forfeited the fair character for probity and honour to which I have trusted.'

'On my life—on my soul,' continued Ratcliffe, raising his voice as the distance between them increased, 'you are safe—perfectly safe.'

CHAPTER XVI

'T was time and griefs
That framed him thus. Time, with his fairer hand,
Offering the fortunes of his former days,
The former man may make him. Bring us to him,
And chance it as it may.

Old Play.

THE sounds of Ratcliffe's voice had died on Isabella's ear; but, as she frequently looked back, it was some encouragement to her to discern his form, now darkening in the gloom. Ere, however, she went much farther, she lost the object in the increasing shade. The last glimmer of the twilight placed her before the hut of the Solitary. She twice extended her hand to the door, and twice she withdrew it; and when she did at length make the effort, the knock did not equal in violence the throb of her own bosom. Her next effort was louder; her third was reiterated, for the fear of not obtaining the protection from which Ratcliffe promised so much began to overpower the terrors of his presence from whom she was to request it. At length, as she still received no answer, she repeatedly called upon the Dwarf by his assumed name, and requested him to answer and open to her.

'What miserable being is reduced,' said the appalling voice of the Solitary, 'to seek refuge here? Go hence: when the heath-fowl need shelter, they seek it not in the nest of the night raven.'

'I come to you, father,' said Isabella, 'in my hour of adversity, even as you yourself commanded, when you promised your heart and your door should be open to my distress; but I fear—'

'Ha!' said the Solitary, 'then thou art Isabella Vere? Give me a token that thou art she.'

'I have brought you back the rose which you gave me; it has not had time to fade ere the hard fate you foretold has come upon me!'

'And if thou hast thus redeemed thy pledge,' said the Dwarf, 'I will not forfeit mine. The heart and the door that are shut against every other earthly being *shall* be open to thee and to thy sorrows.'

She heard him move in his hut, and presently afterwards strike a light. One by one, bolt and bar were then withdrawn, the heart of Isabella throbbing higher as these obstacles to their meeting were successively removed. The door opened and the Solitary stood before her, his uncouth form and features illuminated by the iron lamp which he held in his hand.

'Enter, daughter of affliction,' he said — 'enter the house of misery.'

She entered, and observed, with a precaution which increased her trepidation, that the Recluse's first act, after setting the lamp upon the table, was to replace the numerous bolts which secured the door of his hut. She shrunk as she heard the noise which accompanied this ominous operation, yet remembered Ratcliffe's caution, and endeavoured to suppress all appearance of apprehension. The light of the lamp was weak and uncertain; but the Solitary, without taking immediate notice of Isabella, otherwise than by motioning her to sit down on a small settle beside the fireplace, made haste to kindle some dry furze, which presently cast a blaze through the cottage. Wooden shelves, which bore a few books, some bundles of dried herbs, and one or two wooden cups and platters, were on one side of the fire; on the other were placed some ordinary tools of field labour, mingled with those used by mechanics. Where the bed should have been, there was a wooden frame, strewed with withered moss and rushes, the couch of the ascetic. The whole space of the cottage did not exceed ten feet by six within the walls; and its only furniture, besides what we have mentioned, was a table and two stools formed of rough deals.

Within these narrow precincts Isabella now found herself inclosed with a being whose history had nothing to reassure her, and the fearful conformation of whose hideous countenance inspired an almost superstitious terror. He occupied the seat opposite to her, and, dropping his huge and shaggy eyebrows over his piercing black eyes, gazed at her in silence, as if agitated by a variety of contending feelings. On the other side sate Isabella, pale as death, her long hair uncurled by the evening damps, and falling over her shoulders and breast, as the wet streamers droop from the mast when the storm has passed away and left the vessel stranded on the beach. The Dwarf first

broke the silence with the sudden, abrupt, and alarming question — 'Woman, what evil fate has brought thee hither?'

'My father's danger and your own command,' she replied faintly, but firmly.

'And you hope for aid from me?'

'If you can bestow it,' she replied, still in the same tone of mild submission.

'And how should I possess that power?' continued the Dwarf, with a bitter sneer. 'Is mine the form of a redresser of wrongs? Is this the castle in which one powerful enough to be sued to by a fair suppliant is likely to hold his residence? I but mocked thee, girl, when I said I would relieve thee.'

'Then must I depart and face my fate as I best may!'

'No!' said the Dwarf, rising and interposing between her and the door, and motioning to her sternly to resume her seat 'no! you leave me not in this way; we must have farther conference. Why should one being desire aid of another? Why should not each be sufficient to itself? Look round you; I, the most despised and most decrepit on Nature's common, have required sympathy and help from no one. These stones are of my own piling; these utensils I framed with my own hands; and with this,' and he laid his hand with a fierce smile on the long dagger which he always wore beneath his garment, and unsheathed it so far that the blade glimmered clear in the firelight — 'with this,' he pursued, as he thrust the weapon back into the scabbard, 'I can, if necessary, defend the vital spark inclosed in this poor trunk against the fairest and strongest that shall threaten me with injury.'

It was with difficulty Isabella refrained from screaming out aloud: but she *did* refrain.

'This,' continued the Recluse, 'is the life of nature — solitary, self-sufficing, and independent. The wolf calls not the wolf to aid him in forming his den; and the vulture invites not another to assist her in striking down her prey.

'And when they are unable to procure themselves support,' said Isabella, judiciously thinking that he would be most accessible to argument couched in his own metaphorical style, 'what then is to befall them?'

'Let them starve, die, and be forgotten; it is the common lot of humanity.'

'It is the lot of the wild tribes of nature,' said Isabella, 'but chiefly of those who are destined to support themselves by rapine, which brooks no partner; but it is not the law of nature

in general, even the lower orders have confederacies for mutual defence. But mankind — the race would perish did they cease to aid each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head till the moment that some kind assistant wipes the death-damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All, therefore, that need aid have right to ask it of their fellow-mortals; no one who has the power of granting can refuse it without guilt.'

'And in this simple hope, poor maiden,' said the Solitary, 'thou hast come into the desert to seek one whose wish it were that the league thou hast spoken of were broken for ever, and that in very truth the whole race should perish? Wert thou not frightened?'

'Misery,' said Isabella, firmly, 'is superior to fear.'

'Hast thou not heard it said in thy mortal world that I have leagued myself with other powers, deformed to the eye and malevolent to the human race as myself? Hast thou not heard this? And dost thou seek my cell at midnight?'

'The Being I worship supports me against such idle fears,' said Isabella; but the increasing agitation of her bosom belied the affected courage which her words expressed.

'Ho! ho!' said the Dwarf, 'thou vauntest thyself a philosopher! Yet, shouldst thou not have thought of the danger of entrusting thyself, young and beautiful, in the power of one so spited against humanity as to place his chief pleasure in defacing, destroying, and degrading her fairest works?'

Isabella, much alarmed, continued to answer with firmness — 'Whatever injuries you may have sustained in the world, you are incapable of revenging them on one who never wronged you, nor, wilfully, any other.'

'Ay, but, maiden,' he continued, his dark eyes flashing with an expression of malignity which communicated itself to his wild and distorted features, 'revenge is the hungry wolf, which asks only to tear flesh and lap blood. Think you the lamb's plea of innocence would be listened to by him?'

'Man!' said Isabella, rising, and expressing herself with much dignity, 'I fear not the horrible ideas with which you would impress me. I cast them from me with disdain. Be you mortal or fiend, you would not offer injury to one who sought you as a suppliant in her utmost need. You would not — you durst not.'

'Thou sayst truly, maiden,' rejoined the Solitary; 'I dare not — I would not. Begone to thy dwelling. Fear nothing

with which they threaten thee. Thou hast asked my protection; thou shalt find it effectual.'

'But, father, this very night I have consented to wed the man that I abhor, or I must put the seal to my father's ruin.'

'This night? at what hour?'

'Ere midnight.'

'And twilight,' said the Dwarf, 'has already passed away. But fear nothing, there is ample time to protect thee.'

'And my father?' continued Isabella, in a suppliant tone.

'Thy father,' replied the Dwarf, 'has been, and is, my most bitter enemy. But fear not; thy virtue shall save him. And now, begone; were I to keep thee longer by me I might again fall into the stupid dreams concerning human worth from which I have been so fearfully awakened. But fear nothing; at the very foot of the altar I will redeem thee. Adieu, time presses, and I must act!'

He led her to the door of the hut, which he opened for her departure. She remounted her horse, which had been feeding in the outer inclosure, and pressed him forward by the light of the moon, which was now rising, to the spot where she had left Ratcliffe.

'Have you succeeded?' was his first eager question.

'I have obtained promises from him to whom you sent me; but how can he possibly accomplish them?'

'Thank God!' said Ratcliffe; 'doubt not his power to fulfil his promise.'

At this moment a shrill whistle was heard to resound along the heath.

'Hark!' said Ratcliffe, 'he calls me. Miss Vere, return home, and leave unbolted the postern-door of the garden; to that which opens on the backstairs I have a private key.'

A second whistle was heard, yet more shrill and prolonged than the first.

'I come, I come,' said Ratcliffe; and, setting spurs to his horse, rode over the heath in the direction of the Recluse's hut. Miss Vere returned to the castle, the mettle of the animal on which she rode, and her own anxiety of mind, combining to accelerate her journey.

She obeyed Ratcliffe's directions, though without well apprehending their purpose, and, leaving her horse at large in a paddock near the garden, hurried to her own apartment, which she reached without observation. She now unbolted her door,

and rang her bell for lights. Her father appeared along with the servant who answered her summons.

'He had been twice,' he said, 'listening at her door during the two hours that had elapsed since he left her, and, not hearing her speak, had become apprehensive that she was taken ill.'

'And now, my dear father,' she said, 'permit me to claim the promise you so kindly gave; let the last moments of freedom which I am to enjoy be mine without interruption; and protract to the last moment the respite which is allowed me.'

'I will,' said her father; 'nor shall you be again interrupted. But this disordered dress — this dishevelled hair! do not let me find you thus when I call on you again; the sacrifice, to be beneficial, must be voluntary.'

'Must it be so?' she replied; 'then fear not, my father! the victim shall be adorned.'

CHAPTER XVII

This looks not like a nuptial.

Much Ado about Nothing.

THE chapel in the Castle of Ellieslaw, destined to be the scene of this ill-omened union, was a building of much older date than the castle itself, though that claimed considerable antiquity. Before the wars between England and Scotland had become so common and of such long duration that the buildings along both sides of the Border were chiefly dedicated to warlike purposes, there had been a small settlement of monks at Ellieslaw, a dependency, it is believed by antiquaries, on the rich abbey of Jedburgh. Their possessions had long passed away under the changes introduced by war and mutual ravage. A feudal castle had arisen on the ruin of their cells, and their chapel was included in its precincts.

The edifice, in its round arches and massive pillars, the simplicity of which referred their date to what has been called the Saxon architecture, presented at all times a dark and sombre appearance, and had been frequently used as the cemetery of the family of the feudal lords, as well as formerly of the monastic brethren. But it looked doubly gloomy by the effect of the few and smoky torches which were used to enlighten it on the present occasion, and which, spreading a glare of yellow light in their immediate vicinity, were surrounded beyond by a red and purple halo reflected from their own smoke, and beyond that again by a zone of darkness which magnified the extent of the chapel, while it rendered it impossible for the eye to ascertain its limits. Some injudicious ornaments, adopted in haste for the occasion, rather added to the dreariness of the scene. Old fragments of tapestry, torn from the walls of other apartments, had been hastily and partially disposed around those of the chapel, and mingled inconsistently with scutcheons and funeral emblems of the dead, which they elsewhere exhibited.

On each side of the stone altar was a monument, the appearance of which formed an equally strange contrast. On the one was the figure, in stone, of some grim hermit or monk who had died in the odour of sanctity; he was represented as recumbent, in his cowl and scapular, with his face turned upward as in the act of devotion, and his hands folded, from which his string of beads was dependent. On the other side was a tomb, in the Italian taste, composed of the most beautiful statuary marble, and accounted a model of modern art. It was erected to the memory of Isabella's mother, the late Mrs. Vere of Ellieslaw, who was represented as in a dying posture, while a weeping cherub, with eyes averted, seemed in the act of extinguishing a dying lamp as emblematic of her speedy dissolution. It was, indeed, a masterpiece of art, but misplaced in the rude vault to which it had been consigned. Many were surprised, and even scandalised, that Ellieslaw, not remarkable for attention to his lady while alive, should erect after her death such a costly mausoleum in affected sorrow; others cleared him from the imputation of hypocrisy, and averred that the monument had been constructed under the direction and at the sole expense of Mr. Ratcliffe.

Before these monuments the wedding guests were assembled. They were few in number; for many had left the castle to prepare for the ensuing political explosion, and Ellieslaw was, in the circumstances of the case, far from being desirous to extend invitations farther than to those near relations whose presence the custom of the country rendered indispensable. Next to the altar stood Sir Frederick Langley, dark, moody, and thoughtful even beyond his wont, and near him Mareschal, who was to play the part of bridesman, as it was called. The thoughtless humour of this young gentleman, on which he never deigned to place the least restraint, added to the cloud which overhung the brow of the bridegroom.

'The bride is not yet come out of her chamber,' he whispered to Sir Frederick; 'I trust that we must not have recourse to the violent expedients of the Romans which I read of at college. It would be hard upon my pretty cousin to be run away with twice in two days, though I know none better worth such a violent compliment.'

Sir Frederick attempted to turn a deaf ear to this discourse, humming a tune and looking another way; but Mareschal proceeded in the same wild manner. 'This delay is hard upon Dr. Hobbler, who was disturbed to accelerate preparations

for this joyful event when he had successfully extracted the cork of his third bottle. I hope you will keep him free of the censure of his superiors, for I take it this is beyond canonical hours. But here come Ellieslaw and my pretty cousin —prettier than ever, I think, were it not she seems so faint and so deadly pale. Hark ye, Sir Knight, if she says not YES with right good-will, it shall be no wedding, for all that has come and gone yet.'

'No wedding, sir?' returned Sir Frederick, in a loud whisper, the tone of which indicated that his angry feelings were suppressed with difficulty.

'No; no marriage,' replied Mareschal. 'There's my hand and glove on't.'

Sir Frederick Langley took his hand, and, as he wrung it hard, said in a lower whisper, 'Mareschal, you shall answer this,' and then flung his hand from him.

'That I will readily do,' said Mareschal, 'for never word escaped my lips that my hand was not ready to guarantee. So, speak up, my pretty cousin, and tell me if it be your free will and unbiassed resolution to accept of this gallant knight for your lord and husband: for if you have the tenth part of a scruple upon the subject, fall back, fall edge, he shall not have you.'

'Are you mad, Mr. Mareschal?' said Ellieslaw, who, having been this young man's guardian during his minority, often employed a tone of authority towards him. 'Do you suppose I would drag my daughter to the foot of the altar, were it not her own choice?'

'Tut, Ellieslaw,' retorted the young gentleman, 'never tell me of the contrary; her eyes are full of tears, and her cheeks are whiter than her white dress. I must insist, in the name of common humanity, that the ceremony be adjourned till to-morrow.'

'She shall tell you herself, thou incorrigible intermeddler in what concerns thee not,' said the relentless father, 'that it is her wish the ceremony should go on. Is it not, Isabella, my dear?'

'It is,' said Isabella, half-fainting, 'since there is no help either in God or man.'

The first word alone was distinctly audible. Mareschal shrugged up his shoulders and stepped back. Ellieslaw led, or rather supported, his daughter to the altar. Sir Frederick moved forward and placed himself by her side. The clergyman

opened his prayer-book, and looked to Mr. Vere for the signal to commence the service.

'Proceed,' said the latter.

But a voice, as if issuing from the tomb of his deceased wife, called, in such loud and harsh accents as awakened every echo in the vaulted chapel, 'Forbear!'

All were mute and motionless, till a distant rustle and the clash of swords, or something resembling it, was heard from the remote apartments. It ceased almost instantly.

'What new device is this?' said Sir Frederick fiercely, eyeing Ellieslaw and Mareschal with a glance of malignant suspicion.

'It can be but the frolic of some intemperate guest,' said Ellieslaw, though greatly confounded; 'we must make large allowances for the excess of this evening's festivity. Proceed with the service.'

Before the clergyman could obey, the same prohibition which they had before heard was repeated from the same spot. The female attendants screamed and fled from the chapel; the gentlemen laid their hands on their swords. Ere the first moment of surprise had passed by, the Dwarf stepped from behind the monument, and placed himself full in front of Mr. Vere. The effect of so strange and hideous an apparition in such a place, and in such circumstances, appalled all present, but seemed to annihilate the Laird of Ellieslaw, who, dropping his daughter's arm, staggered against the nearest pillar, and, clasping it with his hands as if for support, laid his brow against the column.

'Who is this misformed monster?' said Sir Frederick; 'and what does he mean by this intrusion?'

'It is one who comes to tell you,' said the Dwarf, with the peculiar acrimony which usually marked his manner, 'that in marrying that young lady you wed neither the heiress of Ellieslaw, nor of Maulcy Hall, nor of Polverton, nor of one furrow of land, unless she marries with MY consent; and to thee that consent shall never be given. Down — down on thy knees, sordid caitiff, and thank Heaven that thou art prevented from wedding qualities with which thou hast no concern — portionless truth, virtue, and innocence. And thou, base ingrate,' he continued, addressing himself to Ellieslaw, 'what is thy wretched subterfuge now? Thou, who wouldst sell thy daughter to relieve thee from danger, as in famine thou wouldst have slain and devoured her to preserve thy own vile life' Ay, hide thy

face with thy hands; well mayst thou blush to look on him whose body thou didst consign to chains, his hand to guilt, and his soul to misery. Saved once more by the virtue of her who calls thee father, go hence, and may the pardon and benefits I confer on thee prove literal coals of fire, till thy brain is seared and scorched like mine!'

Ellieslaw left the chapel with a gesture of mute despair.

'Follow him, Hubert Ratcliffe,' said the Dwarf, 'and inform him of his destiny. He will rejoice, for to breathe air and to handle gold is to him happiness.'

'I understand nothing of all this,' said Sir Frederick Langley. 'But we are here a body of gentlemen in arms and authority for King James; and whether you really, sir, be that Sir Edward Mauley who has been so long supposed dead in confinement, or whether you be an impostor assuming his name and title, we will use the freedom of detaining you till your appearance here, at this moment, is better accounted for; we will have no spies among us. Seize on him, my friends.'

But the domestics shrunk back in doubt and alarm. Sir Frederick himself stepped forward towards the Recluse, as if to lay hands on his person, when his progress was suddenly stopped by the glittering point of a partizan, which the sturdy hand of Hobbie Elliot presented against his bosom.

'I'll gar daylight shine through ye if ye offer to steer him!' said the stout Borderer; 'stand back, or I'll strike ye through! Naebody shall lay a finger on Elshie; he's a canny neighbourly man, aye ready to make a friend hel,o and, though ye may think him a lamiter, yet, grippie for grippie, friend, I'll wad a wether he'll make the bluid spin frae under your nails. He's a teugh carle, Elshie! he grips like a smith's vice.'

'What has brought you here, Elliot?' said Mareschal; 'who called on you for interference?'

'Troth, Mareschal Wells,' answered Hobbie, 'I am just come here, wi' twenty or thretty mair o' us, in my ain name and the King's — or Queen's, ca' they her? — and Canny Elshie's into the bargain, to keep the peace, and pay back some ill-usage Ellieslaw has gien me. A bonny breakfast the loons gae me the ither morning, and him at the bottom on't; and trow ye I wasna ready to supper him up? Ye needna lay your hands on your swords, gentlemen, the house is ours wi' little din; for the doors were open, and there had been ower muckle punch amang your folk; we took their swords and pistols as easily as ye wad shiel peacods.'

Mareschal rushed out, and immediately re-entered the chapel.

'By Heaven! it is true, Sir Frederick; the house is filled with armed strangers, and our drunken beasts are all disarmed. Draw, and let us fight our way.'

'Binna rash — binna rash,' exclaimed Hobbie; 'hear me a bit — hear me a bit. We mean ye nae harm; but, as ye are in arms for King James, as ye ca' him, and the prelates, we thought it right to keep up the auld neighbour war, and stand up for the t'other ane and the Kirk; but we'll no hurt a hair o' your heads if ye like to gang hame quietly. And it will be your best way, for there 's sure news come frae Loudoun that him they ca' Bang, or Byng, or what is 't, has bang'd the French ships and the new king aff the coast however; sae ye had best bide content wi' auld Nanse for want of a better queen.'

Ratcliffe, who at this moment entered, confirmed these accounts so unfavourable to the Jacobite interest. Sir Frederick almost instantly, and without taking leave of any one, left the castle, with such of his attendants as were able to follow him.

'And what will you do, Mr. Mareschal?' said Ratcliffe.

'Why, faith,' answered he, smiling, 'I hardly know; my spirit is too great, and my fortune too small, for me to follow the example of the doughty bridegroom. It is not in my nature, and it is hardly worth my while.'

'Well, then, disperse your men and remain quiet, and this will be overlooked, as there has been no overt act.'

'Hout, ay,' said Elliot, 'just let byganes be byganes, and a' friends again; deil ane I bear malice at but Westburnflat, and I hae gien him baith a het skin and a cauld ane. I hadna changed three blows of the broadsword wi' him before he lap the window into the castle moat, and swattered through it like a wild duck. He 's a clever fallow, indeed! maun kilt awa wi' ae bonny lass in the morning and another at night, less wadna serve him! but if he disna kilt himsell out o' the country, I'se kilt him wi' a tow, for the Castleton meeting 's clean blawn ower; his friends will no countenance him.'

During the general confusion Isabella had thrown herself at the feet of her kinsman, Sir Edward Manley, for so we must now call the Solitary, to express at once her gratitude and to beseech forgiveness for her father. The eyes of all began to be fixed on them, as soon as their own agitation and the bustle of the attendants had somewhat abated. Miss Vere kneeled beside the tomb of her mother, to whose statue her features exhibited a marked resemblance. She held the hand of the Dwarf, which

she kissed repeatedly and bathed with tears. He stood fixed and motionless, excepting that his eyes glanced alternately on the marble figure and the living suppliant. At length the large drops which gathered on his eyelashes compelled him to draw his hand across them.

'I thought, he said, 'that tears and I had done; but we shed them at our birth and their spring dries not until we are in our graves. But no melting of the heart shall dissolve my resolution. I part here, at once and for ever, with all of which the memory (looking to the tomb) or the presence (he pressed Isabella's hand) is dear to me. Speak not to me! attempt not to thwart my determination! it will avail nothing; you will hear of and see this lump of deformity no more. To you I shall be dead ere I am actually in my grave, and you will think of me as of a friend disencumbered from the toils and crimes of existence.'

He kissed Isabella on the forehead, impressed another kiss on the brow of the statue by which she knelt, and left the chapel, followed by Ratcliffe. Isabella, almost exhausted by the emotions of the day, was carried to her apartment by her women. Most of the other guests dispersed, after having separately endeavoured to impress on all who would listen to them their disapprobation of the plots formed against the government, or their regret for having engaged in them. Hobbie Elliot assumed the command of the castle for the night and mounted a regular guard. He boasted not a little of the alacrity with which his friends and he had obeyed a hasty summons received from Elshie through the faithful Ratcliffe. And it was a lucky chance, he said, that on that very day they had got notice that Westburnflat did not intend to keep his tryste at Castleton, but to hold them at defiance; so that a considerable party had assembled at the Heughfoot with the intention of paying a visit to the robber's tower on the ensuing morning, and their course was easily directed to Ellieslaw Castle.

CHAPTER XVIII

Last scene of all,
To close this strange eventful history.

As You Like It.

ON the next morning Mr. Ratcliffe presented Miss Vere with a letter from her father, of which the following is the tenor: —

'My dearest Child,

'The malice of a persecuting government will compel me, for my own safety, to retreat abroad, and to remain for some time in foreign parts. I do not ask you to accompany or follow me; you will attend to my interest and your own more effectually by remaining where you are. It is unnecessary to enter into a minute detail concerning the causes of the strange events which yesterday took place. I think I have reason to complain of the usage I have received from Sir Edward Mauley, who is your nearest kinsman by the mother's side; but, as he has declared you his heir and is to put you in immediate possession of a large part of his fortune, I account it a full atonement. I am aware he has never forgiven the preference which your mother gave to my addresses, instead of complying with the terms of a sort of family compact, which absurdly and tyrannically destined her to wed her deformed relative. The shock was even sufficient to unsettle his wits (which, indeed, were never over-well arranged), and I had, as the husband of his nearest kinswoman and heir, the delicate task of taking care of his person and property until he was reinstated in the management of the latter by those who, no doubt, thought they were doing him justice; although, if some parts of his subsequent conduct be examined, it will appear that he ought, for his own sake, to have been left under the influence of a mild and salutary restraint.

'In one particular, however, he showed a sense of the ties of blood, as well as of his own frailty; for, while he sequestered

himself closely from the world, under various names and disguises, and insisted on spreading a report of his own death (in which, to gratify him, I willingly acquiesced), he left at my disposal the rents of a great proportion of his estates, and especially all those which, having belonged to your mother, reverted to him as a male fief. In this he may have thought that he was acting with extreme generosity, while in the opinion of all impartial men he will only be considered as having fulfilled a natural obligation, seeing that, in justice if not in strict law, you must be considered as the heir of your mother, and I as your legal administrator. Instead, therefore, of considering myself as loaded with obligations to Sir Edward on this account, I think I had reason to complain that these remittances were only doled out to me at the pleasure of Mr. Ratcliffe, who, moreover, exacted from me mortgages over my paternal estate of Ellieslaw for any sums which I required as an extra advance; and thus may be said to have insinuated himself into the absolute management and control of my property. Or, if all this seeming friendship was employed by Sir Edward for the purpose of obtaining a complete command of my affairs, and acquiring the power of ruining me at his pleasure, I feel myself, I must repeat, still less bound by the alleged obligation.

'About the autumn of last year, as I understand, either his own crazed imagination or the accomplishment of some such scheme as I have hinted brought him down to this country. His alleged motive, it seems, was a desire of seeing a monument which he had directed to be raised in the chapel over the tomb of your mother. Mr. Ratcliffe, who at this time had done me the honour to make my house his own, had the complaisance to introduce him secretly into the chapel. The consequence, as he informs me, was a frenzy of several hours, during which he fled into the neighbouring moors, in one of the wildest spots of which he chose, when he was somewhat recovered, to fix his mansion, and set up for a sort of country empiric, a character which, even in his best days, he was fond of assuming. It is remarkable that, instead of informing me of these circumstances, that I might have had the relative of my late wife taken such care of as his calamitous condition required, Mr. Ratcliffe seems to have had such culpable indulgence for his irregular plans as to promise, and even swear, secrecy concerning them. He visited Sir Edward often, and assisted in the fantastic task he had taken upon him of constructing a hermitage. Nothing they appear to have dreaded more than a discovery of their intercourse.

'The ground was open in every direction around, and a small subterranean cave, probably sepulchral, which their researches had detected near the great granite pillar, served to conceal Ratcliffe when any one approached his master. I think you will be of opinion, my love, that this secrecy must have had some strong motive. It is also remarkable that, while I thought my unhappy friend was residing among the monks of La Trappe, he should have been actually living for many months in this bizarre disguise within five miles of my house, and obtaining regular information of my most private movements, either by Ratcliffe or through Westburnflat or others, whom he had the means to bribe to any extent. He makes it a crime against me that I endeavoured to establish your marriage with Sir Frederick. I acted for the best; but if Sir Edward Mauley thought otherwise, why did he not step manfully forward, express his own purpose of becoming a party to the settlements, and take that interest which he is entitled to claim in you as heir to his great property?

'Even now, though your rash and eccentric relation is somewhat tardy in announcing his purpose, I am far from opposing my authority against his wishes, although the person he desires you to regard as your future husband be young Earnscliff, the very last whom I should have thought likely to be acceptable to him, considering a certain fatal event. But I give my free and hearty consent, providing the settlements are drawn in such an irrevocable form as may secure my child from suffering by that state of dependence, and that sudden and causeless revocation of allowances, of which I have so much reason to complain. Of Sir Frederick Langley, I augur, you will hear no more. He is not likely to claim the hand of a dowerless maiden. I therefore commit you, my dear Isabella, to the wisdom of Providence and to your own prudence, begging you to lose no time in securing those advantages which the fickleness of your kinsman has withdrawn from me to shower upon you.

'Mr. Ratcliffe mentioned Sir Edward's intention to settle a considerable sum upon me yearly for my maintenance in foreign parts; but this my heart is too proud to accept from him. I told him I had a dear child who, while in affluence herself, would never suffer me to be in poverty. I thought it right to intimate this to him pretty roundly, that, whatever increase be settled upon you, it may be calculated so as to cover this necessary and natural encumbrance. I shall willingly

settle upon you the castle and manor of Ellieslaw, to show my parental affection and disinterested zeal for promoting your settlement in life. The annual interest of debts charged on the estate somewhat exceeds the income, even after a reasonable rent has been put upon the mansion and mains. But as all the debts are in the person of Mr. Ratcliffe, as your kinsman's trustee, he will not be a troublesome creditor. And here I must make you aware that, though I have to complain of Mr. Ratcliffe's conduct to me personally, I, nevertheless, believe him a just and upright man, with whom you may safely consult on your affairs, not to mention that to cherish his good opinion will be the best way to retain that of your kinsman. Remember me to Marchie. I hope he will not be troubled on account of late matters. I will write more fully from the Continent. Meanwhile, I rest your loving father,

RICHARD VERE.'

The above letter throws the only additional light which we have been able to procure upon the earlier part of our story. It was Hobbie's opinion, and may be that of most of our readers, that the Recluse of Mucklestane Moor had but a kind of a gloaming or twilight understanding; and that he had neither very clear views as to what he himself wanted nor was apt to pursue his ends by the clearest and most direct means; so that to seek the clue of his conduct was likened by Hobbie to looking for a straight path through a common over which are a hundred devious tracks, but not one distinct line of road.

When Isabella had perused the letter her first inquiry was after her father. He had left the castle, she was informed, early in the morning, after a long interview with Mr. Ratcliffe, and was already far on his way to the next port, where he might expect to find shipping for the Continent.

'Where was Sir Edward Mauley?'

No one had seen the Dwarf since the eventful scene of the preceding evening.

'Odd, if ony thing has befa'en puir Elshie,' said Hobbie Elliot, 'I wad rather I were harried ower again.'

He immediately rode to his dwelling, and the remaining she-goat came bleating to meet him, for her milking time was long past. The Solitary was nowhere to be seen; his door, contrary to wont, was open, his fire extinguished, and the whole hut was left in the state which it exhibited on Isabella's visit to him. It was pretty clear that the means of conveyance

which had brought the Dwarf to Ellieslaw on the preceding evening had removed him from it to some other place of abode. Hobbie returned disconsolate to the castle.

'I am doubting we hae lost Canny Elshie for gude an' a'.'

'You have indeed,' said Ratcliffe, producing a paper, which he put into Hobbie's hands; 'but read that and you will perceive you have been no loser by having known him.'

It was a short deed of gift, by which 'Sir Edward Mauley, otherwise called Elshender the Recluse, endowed Halbert or Hobbie Elliot and Grace Armstrong in full property with a considerable sum borrowed by Elliot from him.'

Hobbie's joy was mingled with feelings which brought tears down his rough cheeks.

'It 's a queer thing,' he said: 'but I canna joy in the gear unless I kend the puir body was happy that gave it me.'

'Next to enjoying happiness ourselves,' said Ratcliffe, 'is the consciousness of having bestowed it on others. Had all my master's benefits been conferred like the present, what a different return would they have produced! But the indiscriminate profusion that would glut avarice or supply prodigality neither does good nor is rewarded by gratitude. It is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind.'

'And that wad be a light har'st,' said Hobbie; 'but, wi' my young leddie's leave, I wad fain take down Elshie's skeps o' bees and set them in Grace's bit flower-yard at the Heughfoot: they shall ne'er be smeekit by ony o' huz. And the puir goat, she would be negleckit about a great toun like this; and she could feed bonnily on our ain lea by the burn side, and the hounds wad ken her in a day's time and never fash her, and Grace wad milk her ilka morning wi' her ain hand, for Elshie's sake; for, though he was thrawn and cankered in his converse, he likeit dumb creatures weel.'

Hobbie's requests were readily granted, not without some wonder at the natural delicacy of feeling which pointed out to him the mode of displaying his gratitude. He was delighted when Ratcliffe informed him that his benefactor should not remain ignorant of the care which he took of his favourite.

'And mind be sure and tell him that grannie and the tithes, and, abune a', Grace and mysell, are weel and thriving, and that it 's a' his doing; that canna but please him, ane wad think.'

And Elliot and the family at Heughfoot were, and continued to be, as fortunate and happy as his undaunted honesty, tenderness, and gallantry so well merited.

All bar between the marriage of Earnscliff and Isabella was now removed, and the settlements which Ratcliffe produced on the part of Sir Edward Mauley might have satisfied the cupidity of Ellieslaw himself. But Miss Vere and Ratcliffe thought it unnecessary to mention to Earnscliff that one great motive of Sir Edward, in thus loading the young pair with benefits, was to expiate his having, many years before, shed the blood of his father in a hasty brawl. If it be true, as Ratcliffe asserted, that the Dwarf's extreme misanthropy seemed to relax somewhat under the consciousness of having diffused happiness among so many, the recollection of this circumstance might probably be one of his chief motives for refusing obstinately ever to witness their state of contentment.

Mareschal hunted, shot, and drank claret, tired of the country, went abroad, served three campaigns, came home, and married Lucy Ilderton.

Years fled over the heads of Earnscliff and his wife, and found and left them contented and happy. The scheming ambition of Sir Frederick Langley engaged him in the unfortunate insurrection of 1715. He was made prisoner at Preston, in Lancashire, with the Earl of Derwentwater and others. His defence, and the dying speech which he made at his execution, may be found in the *State Trials*. Mr. Vere, supplied by his daughter with an ample income, continued to reside abroad, engaged deeply in the affair of Law's bank during the regency of the Duke of Orleans, and was at one time supposed to be immensely rich. But, on the bursting of that famous bubble, he was so much chagrined at being again reduced to a moderate annuity (although he saw thousands of his companions in misfortune absolutely starving) that vexation of mind brought on a paralytic stroke, of which he died, after lingering under its effects a few weeks.

Willie of Westburnflat fled from the wrath of Hobbie Elliot, as his betters did from the pursuit of the law. His patriotism urged him to serve his country abroad, while his reluctance to leave his native soil pressed him rather to remain in the beloved island and collect purses, watches, and rings on the highroads at home. Fortunately for him, the first impulse prevailed, and he joined the army under Marlborough; obtained

a commission, to which he was recommended by his services in collecting cattle for the commissariat; returned home after many years with some money (how come by, Heaven only knows); demolished the peel-house at Westburnflat and built in its stead a high narrow 'onstead' of three stories, with a chimney at each end; drank brandy with the neighbours whom in his younger days he had plundered; died in his bed, and is recorded upon his tombstone at Kirkwhistle (still extant) as having played all the parts of a brave soldier, a discreet neighbour, and a singular Christian, being epithets which the village sculptor had at command of any person who ordered a tombstone of his manufacture.

Mr. Ratcliffe resided usually with the family at Ellieslaw, but regularly every spring and autumn he absented himself for about a month. On the direction and purpose of his periodical journey he remained steadily silent; but it was well understood that he was then in attendance on his unfortunate patron. At length, on his return from one of these visits, his grave countenance and deep mourning dress announced to the Ellieslaw family that their benefactor was no more. Sir Edward's death made no addition to their fortune, for he had divested himself of his property during his lifetime, and chiefly in their favour. Ratcliffe, his sole confidant, died at a good old age, but without ever naming the place to which his master had finally retired, or the manner of his death, or the place of his burial. It was supposed that on all these particulars his patron had enjoined him strict secrecy.

The sudden disappearance of Elshie from his extraordinary hermitage corroborated the reports which the common people had spread concerning him. Many believed that, having ventured to enter a consecrated building, contrary to his paction with the Evil One, he had been bodily carried off while on his return to his cottage: but most are of opinion that he only disappeared for a season, and continues to be seen from time to time among the hills. And retaining, according to custom, a more vivid recollection of his wild and desperate language than of the benevolent tendency of most of his actions, he is usually identified with the malignant demon called the Man of the Moors, whose feats were quoted by Mrs. Elliot to her grandsons; and, accordingly, is generally represented as bewitching the sheep, causing the ewes to 'keb,' that is, to cast their lambs, or seen loosening the im-

pending wreath of snow to precipitate its weight on such as take shelter during the storm beneath the bank of a torrent or under the shelter of a deep glen. In short, the evils most dreaded and deprecated by the inhabitants of that pastoral country are ascribed to the agency of the BLACK DWARF.

A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

INTRODUCTION TO A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

THE *Legend of Montrose* was written chiefly with a view to place before the reader the melancholy fate of John Lord Kilpont, eldest son of William Earl of Airth and Menteith, and the singular circumstances attending the birth and history of James Stewart of Ardvoirlich, by whose hand the unfortunate nobleman fell.

Our subject leads us to talk of deadly feuds, and we must begin with one still more ancient than that to which our story relates. During the reign of James IV. a great feud between the powerful families of Drummond and Murray divided Perthshire. The former, being the most numerous and powerful, cooped up eight score of the Murrays in the kirk of Monivaird and set fire to it. The wives and the children of the ill-fated men, who had also found shelter in the church, perished by the same conflagration. One man, named David Murray, escaped by the humanity of one of the Drummonds, who received him in his arms as he leaped from amongst the flames. As King James IV. ruled with more activity than most of his predecessors, this cruel deed was severely revenged, and several of the perpretrators were beheaded at Stirling. In consequence of the prosecution against his clan, the Drummond by whose assistance David Murray had escaped fled to Ireland, until, by means of the person whose life he had saved, he was permitted to return to Scotland, where he and his descendants were distinguished by the name of Drummond-Eirinich, or Ernoch, that is, Drummond Ireland; and the same title was bestowed on their estate.

The Drummond-Ernoch of James VI.'s time was a king's forester in the forest of Glenartney, and chanced to be employed there in search of venison about the year 1588, or early in 1589. This forest was adjacent to the chief haunts of the

MacGregors, or a particular race of them known by the title of MacEagh, or Children of the Mist. They considered the forester's hunting in their vicinity as an aggression, or perhaps they had him at feud for the apprehension or slaughter of some of their own name, or for some similar reason. This tribe of MacGregors were outlawed and persecuted, as the reader may see in the Introduction to *Rob Roy;* and every man's hand being against them, their hand was of course directed against every man. In short, they surprised and slew Drummond-Ernoch, cut off his head, and carried it with them, wrapt in the corner of one of their plaids.

In the full exultation of vengeance they stopped at the house of Ardvoirlich and demanded refreshment, which the lady, a sister of the murdered Drummond-Ernoch (her husband being absent), was afraid or unwilling to refuse. She caused bread and cheese to be placed before them, and gave directions for more substantial refreshments to be prepared. While she was absent with this hospitable intention the barbarians placed the head of her brother on the table, filling the mouth with bread and cheese, and bidding him eat, for many a merry meal he had eaten in that house.

The poor woman, returning and beholding this dreadful sight, shrieked aloud and fled into the woods, where, as described in the romance, she roamed a raving maniac, and for some time secreted herself from all living society. Some remaining instinctive feeling brought her at length to steal a glance from a distance at the maidens while they milked the cows, which being observed, her husband, Ardvoirlich, had her conveyed back to her home and detained her there till she gave birth to a child, of whom she had been pregnant; after which she was observed gradually to recover her mental faculties.

Meanwhile the outlaws had carried to the utmost their insults against the regal authority, which indeed, as exercised, they had little reason for respecting. They bore the same bloody trophy which they had so savagely exhibited to the lady of Ardvoirlich into the old church of Balquidder, nearly in the centre of their country, where the Laird of MacGregor and all his clan, being convened for the purpose, laid their hands successively on the dead man's head and swore, in heathenish and barbarous manner, to defend the author of the deed. This fierce and vindictive combination gave the Author's late and lamented friend, Sir Alexander Boswell, Bar^t., subject for a

spirited poem, entitled *Clan-Alpin's Vow*, which was printed, but not, I believe, published,[1] in 1811.[2]

The fact is ascertained by a proclamation from the Privy Council, dated 4th February 1589, directing letters of fire and sword against the MacGregors.[3] This fearful commission was executed with uncommon fury. The late excellent John Buchanan of Cambusmore showed the Author some correspondence between his ancestor, the Laird of Buchanan, and Lord Drummond about sweeping certain valleys with their followers, on a fixed time and rendezvous, and 'taking sweet revenge for the death of their cousin, Drummond-Ernoch.' In spite of all, however, that could be done, the devoted tribe of MacGregor still bred up survivors to sustain and to inflict new cruelties and injuries.[4]

Meanwhile young James Stewart of Ardvoirlich grew up to manhood uncommonly tall, strong, and active, with such power in the grasp of his hand in particular as could force the blood from beneath the nails of the persons who contended with him in this feat of strength. His temper was moody, fierce, and irascible; yet he must have had some ostensible good qualities, as he was greatly beloved by Lord Kilpont, the eldest son of the Earl of Airth and Menteith.

This gallant young nobleman joined Montrose in the setting up his standard in 1644, just before the decisive battle at Tippermuir, on the 1st September in that year. At that time Stewart of Ardvoirlich shared the confidence of the young Lord by day and his bed by night, when, about four or five days after the battle, Ardvoirlich, either from a fit of sudden fury or

[1] Printed for private circulation at Edinburgh in 1811 (*Laing*).

[2] See Appendix No. I.

[3] See Appendix No. II.

[4] I embrace the opportunity given me by a second mention of this tribe to notice an error which imputes to an individual named Gair Mohr MacGregor the slaughter of the students at the battle of Glenfruin. I am informed from the authority of John Gregorson, Esq., that the chieftain so named was dead nearly a century before the battle in question, and could not, therefore, have done the cruel action mentioned. The mistake does not rest with me, as I disclaimed being responsible for the tradition while I quoted it, but with vulgar fame, which is always disposed to ascribe remarkable actions to a remarkable name. — See the erroneous passage, *Rob Roy*, Introduction, p. xiii; and so soft sleep the offended phantom of Dugald Ciar Mohr.

It is with mingled pleasure and shame that I record the more important error of having announced as deceased my learned acquaintance, the Rev. Dr. Grahame, minister of Aberfoil. — See *Rob Roy*, p. 408. I cannot now recollect the precise ground of my depriving my learned and excellent friend of his existence, unless, like Mr. Kirk, his predecessor in the parish, the excellent Doctor had made a short trip to Fairyland, with whose wonder he is so well acquainted. But however I may have been misled, my regret is most sincere for having spread such a rumour; and no one can be more gratified than I that the report, however I have been induced to credit and give it currency, is a false one, and that Dr. Grahame is still the living pastor of Aberfoil, for the delight and instruction of his brother antiquaries.

deep malice long entertained against his unsuspecting friend, stabbed Lord Kilpont to the heart, and escaped from the camp of Montrose, having killed a sentinel who attempted to detain him. Bishop Guthrie gives as a reason for this villainous action, that Lord Kilpont had rejected with abhorrence a proposal of Ardvoirlich to assassinate Montrose. But it does not appear that there is any authority for this charge, which rests on mere suspicion. Ardvoirlich, the assassin, certainly did fly to the Covenanters, and was employed and promoted by them. He obtained a pardon for the slaughter of Lord Kilpont, confirmed by Parliament in 1644, and was made major of Argyle's regiment in 1648. Such are the facts of the tale here given as a legend of Montrose's wars. The reader will find they are considerably altered in the fictitious narrative.

The Author has endeavoured to enliven the tragedy of the tale by the introduction of a personage proper to the time and country. In this he has been held by excellent judges to have been in some degree successful. The contempt of commerce entertained by young men having some pretence to gentility, the poverty of the country of Scotland, the national disposition to wandering and to adventure, all conduced to lead the Scots abroad into the military service of countries which were at war with each other. They were distinguished on the Continent by their bravery; but in adopting the trade of mercenary soldiers they necessarily injured their national character. The tincture of learning which most of them possessed degenerated into pedantry; their good breeding became mere ceremonial; their fear of dishonour no longer kept them aloof from that which was really unworthy, but was made to depend on certain punctilious observances totally apart from that which was in itself deserving of praise. A cavalier of honour in search of his fortune might, for example, change his service as he would his shirt, fight, like the doughty Captain Dalgetty, in one cause after another without regard to the justice of the quarrel, and might plunder the peasantry subjected to him by the fate of war with the most unrelenting rapacity; but he must beware how he sustained the slightest reproach, even from a clergyman, if it had regard to neglect on the score of duty. The following occurrence will prove the truth of what I mean:

'Here I must not forget the memory of our preacher, Master William Forbesse, a preacher for souldiers, yea, and a captaine in neede to lead souldiers on a good occasion, being full of courage, with discretion and ...al conduct beyond some captaines I have knowne, that were not s...

capable as he. At this time he not onely prayed for us, but went on with us, to remarke, as I thinke, men's carriage, and having found a Sergeant neglecting his dutie and his honour at such a time (whose name I will not expresse), having chidden him, did promise to reveale him unto me, as he did after their service. The sergeant being called before me and accused, did deny his accusation, alleaging, if he were no Pastour that had alleaged it, he would not lie under the injury. The preacher offered to fight with him [in proof] that it was truth he had spoken of him; whereupon I cashiered the Sergeant, and gave his place to a worthier, called Mongo Gray, a gentleman of good worth and of much courage. The Sergeant being cashiered, never called Master William to account, for which he was evill thought of; so that he retired home, and quit the warres.'

The above quotation is taken from a work which the Author repeatedly consulted while composing the following sheets, and which is in great measure written in the humour of Captain Dugald Dalgetty. It bears the following formidable title: —

'Monro his Expedition with the worthy Scots Regiment (called Mac-Keyes Regiment), levied in August 1626 by Sr. Donald MacKey, Lord Rhees, Colonell for his Majesties service of Denmark, and reduced after the battaile of Nerling to one Company, in September 1634, at Wormes, in the Paltz. Discharged in severall Duties and Observations of service, first, under the magnanimous King of Denmark, during his warres against the Emperour; afterward under the invincible King of Sweden, during his Majesties lifetime; and since under the Directour-Generall, the Rex-Chancellor Oxensterne, and his Generalls. Collected and gathered together at spare hours by Colonell Robert Monro, as First Lievetenant under the said Regiment, to the Noble and worthy Captaine Thomas MacKenyee of Kildon, Brother to the noble Lord the Lord Earle of Seafort, for the use of all worthie Cavaliers favouring the laudable profession of armes. To which is annexed the Abridgement of Exercise, and divers Practicall Observations for the Younger Officer, his consideration; ending with the Souldiers Meditations going on Service.' — London, 1637.

Another worthy of the same school and nearly the same views of the military character is Sir James Turner, a soldier of fortune, who rose to considerable rank in the reign of Charles II., had a command in Galloway and Dumfriesshire for the suppression of conventicles, and was made prisoner by the insurgent Covenanters in that rising which was followed by the battle of Pentland. Sir James is a person even of superior pretensions to Lieutenant-Colonel Monro, having written a military treatise on the pike-exercise, called *Pallas Armata*. Moreover, he was educated at Glasgow College, though he escaped to become an ensign in the German wars, instead of taking his degree of Master of Arts at that learned seminary.

In latter times he was author of several discourses on histori-

cal and literary subjects, from which the Bannatyne Club have extracted and printed such passages as concern his Life and Times, under the title of Sir James Turner's *Memoirs*. From this curious book I extract the following passage, as an example of how Captain Dalgetty might have recorded such an incident had he kept a journal, or, to give it a more just character, it is such as the genius of De Foe would have devised to give the minute and distinguishing features of truth to a fictitious narrative: —

'Heere I will set doun ane accident befell me; for thogh it was not a very strange one, yet it was a very od one in all its parts. My two brigads lay in a village within halfe a mile of Applebie; my oun quarter was in a gentleman's house who was a Ritmaster, and at that time with Sir Marmaduke; his wife keepd her chamber readie to be brought to bed. The castle being over, and Lambert farre enough, I resolvd to go to bed everie night, haveing had fatigue enough before. The first night I sleepd well enough; and rising nixt morning, I misd one linnen stocking one halfe silke one, and one boothose, the accoustrement under a boote for one leg; neither could they be found for any search. Being provided of more of the same kind, I made myselfe reddie and rode to the head quarters. At my returne, I could heare no news of my stockins. That night I went to bed, and nixt morning found myselfe just so used; missing the three stockins for one leg onlie, the other three being left intire as they were the day before. A narrower search than the first was made, bot without successe. I had yet in reserve one paire of whole stockings, and a paire of boothose greater than the former. These I put on my legs. The third morning I found the same usage, the stockins for one leg onlie left me. It was time for me then, and my servants too, to imagine it must be rats that had shard my stockins so equallie with me; and this the mistress of the house knew well enough, but wold not tell it me. The roome, which was a low parlour, being well searchd with candles, the top of my great boothose was found at a hole, in which they had drawne all the rest. I went abroad and ordered the boards to be raised, to see how the rats had disposd of my moveables. The mistress sent a servant of her oune to be present at this action, which she knew concernd her. One board being bot a litle opend, a litle boy of mine thrust in his hand, and fetchd with him foure and tuentie old peeces of gold, and ane angell. The servant of the house affirmd it appertaind to his mistres. The boy bringing the gold to me, I went immediatlie to the gentlewoman's chamber, and told her it was probable Lambert haveing quarterd in that house, as indeed he had, some of his servants might have hid that gold; and if so, it was lawfull mine; bot if she could make it appeare it belongd to her, I sould immediatlie give it her. The poore gentlewoman told me with many teares that her husband, being none of the frugallest men (and indeed I was a spendthrift), she had hid that gold without his knowledge to make use of it as she had occasion, especiallie when she lay in; and conjund me, as I lovd the King (for whom her husband and she had sufferd much) not to detaine her gold. She said, if there was either more or lesse then foure and tuentie whole peeces and two halfe ones, it sould be

none of hers; and that they were put by her in a red velvet purse. After I had given her assurance of her gold, a new search is made, the other angell is found, the velvet purse all gnawd in bits, as my stockins were, and the gold instantlie restord to the gentlewoman. I have often heard that the eating or gnawing of cloths by rats is ominous, and portends some mischance to fall on these to whom the cloths belong. I thank God I was never addicted to such divinations, or heeded them. It is true, that more misfortuns then one fell on me shortlie after; bot I am sure I could have better forseene them myselfe then rats or any such vermine, and yet did it not. I have heard indeed many fine stories told of rats, how they abandon houses and ships when the first are to be burnt and the second dround. Naturalists say they are very sagacious creatures, and I beleeve they are so; bot I shall never be of the opinion they can forsee future contingencies, which I suppose the divell himselfe can neither forknow nor fortell; these being things which the Almightie hath keept hidden in the bosome of His divine prescience. And whither the great God hath preordained or predestinated these things, which to us are contingent, to fall out by ane uncontrollable and unavoidable necessitie, is a question not yet decided.'[1]

In quoting these ancient authorities, I must not forget the more modern sketch of a Scottish soldier of the old fashion, by a masterhand, in the character of Lesmahagow, since the existence of that doughty captain alone must deprive the present Author of all claim to absolute originality. Still Dalgetty, as the production of his own fancy, has been so far a favourite with its parent that he has fallen into the error of assigning to the Captain too prominent a part in the story. This is the opinion of a critic[2] who encamps on the highest pinnacles of literature; and the Author is so far fortunate in having incurred his censure that it gives his modesty a decent apology for quoting the praise, which it would have ill-befitted him to bring forward in an unmingled state. The passage occurs in the *Edinburgh Review* No. 65, containing a criticism on *Ivanhoe*:—

'There is too much, perhaps, of Dalgetty, or, rather, he engrosses too great a proportion of the work, for, in himself, we think he is uniformly entertaining; and the Author has nowhere shown more affinity to that matchless spirit who could bring out his Falstaffs and his Pistols in act after act, and play after play, and exercise them every time with scenes of unbounded loquacity, without either exhausting their humour or varying a note from its characteristic tone, than in his large and reiterated specimens of the eloquence of the redoubted Rittmaster. The general idea of the character is familiar to our comic dramatists after the Restoration, and may be said in some measure to be compounded of Captain

[1] Sir James Turner's *Memoirs*, Bannatyne edition, p. 59.
[2] Lord Jeffrey (*Laing*).

Fluellen and Bobadil; but the ludicrous combination of the *soldado* with the Divinity student of Marischal College is entirely original; and the mixture of talent, selfishness, courage, coarseness, and conceit was never so happily exemplified. Numerous as his speeches are, there is not one that is not characteristic, and, to our taste, divertingly ludicrous.'

Sergeant More M'Alpin was, during his residence among us, one of the most honoured inhabitants of Gandercleugh. No one thought of disputing his title to the great leathern chair on the 'cosiest side of the chimney' in the common room of the Wallace Arms on a Saturday evening. No less would our sexton, John Duirward, have held it an unlicensed intrusion to suffer any one to induct himself into the corner of the left-hand pew nearest to the pulpit which the Sergeant regularly occupied on Sundays. There he sat, his blue invalid uniform brushed with the most scrupulous accuracy. Two medals of merit displayed at his button-hole, as well as the empty sleeve which should have been occupied by his right arm, bore evidence of his hard and honourable service. His weatherbeaten features, his grey hair tied in a thin queue in the military fashion of former days, and the right side of his head a little turned up, the better to catch the sound of the clergyman's voice, were all marks of his profession and infirmities. Beside him sat his sister Janet, a little neat old woman, with a Highland curch and tartan plaid, watching the very looks of her brother, to her the greatest man upon earth, and actively looking out for him, in his silver clasped Bible, the texts which the minister quoted or expounded.

I believe it was the respect that was universally paid to this worthy veteran by all ranks in Gandercleugh which induced him to choose our village for his residence, for such was by no means his original intention.

He had risen to the rank of sergeant-major of artillery by hard service in various quarters of the world, and was reckoned one of the most tried and trusty men of the Scotch train. A ball, which shattered his arm in a Peninsular campaign,[1] at length procured him an honourable discharge, with an allowance from Chelsea and a handsome gratuity from the patriotic fund. Moreover, Sergeant More M'Alpin[1] had been prudent as well

[1] The character of Sergeant M'Alpin may probably be founded on that of the Author's old acquaintance, Dalgetty of Prestonpans, whose name has been immortalised in the *Legend of Montrose*.—See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. i. p. 32, ed. 1862 (*Laing*).

as valiant; and, from prize money and savings, had become master of a small sum in the three per cent consols.

He retired with the purpose of enjoying this income in the wild Highland glen in which, when a boy, he had herded black cattle and goats, ere the roll of the drum had made him cock his bonnet an inch higher and follow its music for nearly forty years. To his recollection this retired spot was unparalleled in beauty by the richest scenes he had visited in his wanderings. Even the Happy Valley of Rasselas would have sunk into nothing upon the comparison. He came, he revisited the loved scene; it was but a sterile glen, surrounded with rude crags and traversed by a northern torrent. This was not the worst. The fires had been quenched upon thirty hearths; of the cottage of his fathers he could but distinguish a few rude stones; the language was almost extinguished; the ancient race from which he boasted his descent had found a refuge beyond the Atlantic. One Southland farmer, three grey plaided shepherds, and six dogs now tenanted the whole glen, which in his youth had maintained in content, if not in competence, upwards of two hundred inhabitants.

In the house of the new tenant Sergeant M'Alpin found, however, an unexpected source of pleasure, and a means of employing his social affections. His sister Janet had fortunately entertained so strong a persuasion that her brother would one day return that she had refused to accompany her kinsfolk upon their emigration. Nay, she had consented, though not without a feeling of degradation, to take service with the intruding Lowlander, who, though a Saxon, she said had proved a kind man to her. This unexpected meeting with his sister seemed a cure for all the disappointments which it had been Sergeant More's lot to encount[illegible]ough it was not without a reluctant tear that he heard [illegible] Highland woman alone could tell it, the story of [illegible] of his kinsmen.

She narrated at great [illegible] offers they had made of advanced rent, the payment of which must have reduced them to the extremity of [illegible], which they were yet contented to face, for permission to live and die on their native soil. Nor did Janet forget the portents which had announced the departure of the Celtic race and the arrival of the strangers. For two years previous to the emigration, when the night wind howled down the pass of Balachra, its notes were distinctly modelled to the tune of '*Ha til mi tulidh* (We return no more), with which the emigrants usually bid farewell to their

native shores. The uncouth cries of the Southland shepherds and the barking of their dogs were often heard in the mist of the hills long before their actual arrival. A bard, the last of his race, had commemorated the expulsion of the natives of the glen in a tune, which brought tears into the aged eyes of the veteran, and of which the first stanza may be thus rendered: —

> Woe, woe, son of the Lowlander,
> Why wilt thou leave thine own bonny Border?
> Why comest thou hither, disturbing the Highlander,
> Wasting the glen that was once in fair order!

What added to Sergeant More M'Alpin's distress upon the occasion was, that the chief by whom this change had been effected was, by tradition and common opinion, held to represent the ancient leaders and fathers of the expelled fugitives; and it had hitherto been one of Sergeant More's principal subjects of pride to prove by genealogical deduction in what degree of kindred he stood to this personage. A woeful change was now wrought in his sentiments towards him.

'I cannot curse him,' he said, as he rose and strode through the room, when Janet's narrative was finished — 'I will not curse him; he is the descendant and representative of my fathers. But never shall mortal man hear me name his name again.' And he kept his word; for, until his dying day, no man heard him mention his selfish and hard-hearted chieftain.

After giving a day to sad recollections, the hardy spirit which had carried him through so many dangers manned the Sergeant's bosom against this cruel disappointment. 'He would go,' he said, 'to Canada to his kinsfolk, where they had named a Transatlantic valley after the glen of their fathers. Janet,' he said, 'should kilt her coats like a leaguer lady; d n the distance! it was a flea's leap to the voyages and marches he had made on a slighter occasion.'

With this purpose he left the Highlands, and came with his sister as far as Gandercleugh, on his way to Glasgow, to take a passage to Canada. But winter was now set in, and, as he thought it advisable to wait for a spring passage, when the St. Lawrence should be open, he settled among us for the few months of his stay in Britain. As we said before, the respectable old man met with deference and attention from all ranks of society; and when spring returned he was so satisfied with his quarters that he did not renew the purpose of his voyage. Janet was afraid of the sea, and he himself felt the infirmities

of age and hard service more than he had at first expected. And, as he confessed to the clergyman and my worthy principal, Mr. Cleishbotham, 'it was better staying with kenn'd friends than going farther and faring worse.'

He therefore established himself and his domicile at Ganderclengh, to the great satisfaction, as we have already said, of all its inhabitants, to whom he became, in respect of military intelligence and able commentaries upon the newspapers, gazettes, and bulletins, a very oracle, explanatory of all martial events, past, present, or to come.

It is true, the Sergeant had his inconsistencies. He was a steady Jacobite, his father and his four uncles having been out in the forty-five; but he was a no less steady adherent of King George, in whose service he had made his little fortune and lost three brothers; so that you were in equal danger to displease him in terming Prince Charles the Pretender or by saying anything derogatory to the dignity of King George. Further, it must not be denied that, when the day of receiving his dividends came round, the Sergeant was apt to tarry longer at the Wallace Arms of an evening than was consistent with strict temperance, or indeed with his worldly interest; for upon these occasions his compotators sometimes contrived to flatter his partialities by singing Jacobite songs, and drinking confusion to Bonaparte and the health of the Duke of Wellington, until the Sergeant was not only flattered into paying the whole reckoning, but occasionally induced to lend small sums to his interested companions. After such 'sprays,' as he called them, were over, and his temper once more cool, he seldom failed to thank God, and the Duke of York, who had made it much more difficult for an old soldier to ruin himself by his folly than had been the case in his younger days.

It was not on such occasions that I made a part of Sergeant More M'Alpin's society. But often, when my leisure would permit, I used to seek him on what he called his morning and evening parade, on which, when the weather was fair, he appeared as regularly as if summoned by tuck of drum. His morning walk was beneath the elms in the churchyard; 'for death,' he said, 'had been his next-door neighbour for so many years that he had no apology for dropping the acquaintance.' His evening promenade was on the bleaching green by the river-side, where he was sometimes to be seen on an open bench, with spectacles on nose, conning over the newspapers to a circle of village politicians, explaining military terms, and aiding the compre-

hension of his hearers by lines drawn on the ground with the end of his rattan. On other occasions he was surrounded by a bevy of school-boys, whom he sometimes drilled to the manual, and sometimes, with less approbation on the part of their parents, instructed in the mystery of artificial fireworks; for in the case of public rejoicings the Sergeant was pyrotechnist, as the encyclopedia calls it, to the village of Ganderclengh.

It was in his morning walk that I most frequently met with the veteran. And I can hardly yet look upon the village foot-path, overshadowed by the row of lofty elms, without thinking I see his upright form advancing towards me with measured step, and his cane advanced, ready to pay me the military salute: but he is dead, and sleeps with his faithful Janet under the third of those very trees, counting from the stile at the west corner of the churchyard.

The delight which I had in Sergeant M'Alpin's conversation related not only to his own adventures, of which he had encountered many in the course of a wandering life, but also to his recollection of numerous Highland traditions, in which his youth had been instructed by his parents, and of which he would in after life have deemed it a kind of heresy to question the authenticity. Many of these belonged to the wars of Montrose, in which some of the Sergeant's ancestry had, it seems, taken a distinguished part. It has happened that, although these civil commotions reflect the highest honour upon the Highlanders, being indeed the first occasion upon which they showed themselves superior, or even equal, to their Low Country neighbours in military encounters, they have been less commemorated among them than any one would have expected, judging from the abundance of traditions which they have preserved upon less interesting subjects. It was, therefore, with great pleasure that I extracted from my military friend some curious particulars respecting that time: they are mixed with that measure of the wild and wonderful which belongs to the period and the narrator, but which I do not in the least object to the reader's treating with disbelief, providing he will be so good as give implicit credit to the natural events of the story, which, like all those which I have had the honour to put under his notice, actually rest upon a basis of truth.

A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

CHAPTER I

Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun,
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery,
And prove their doctrine orthodox,
By apostolic blows and knocks.

BUTLER.

IT was during the period of that great and bloody Civil War which agitated Britain during the 17th century that our tale has its commencement. Scotland had as yet remained free from the ravages of intestine war, although its inhabitants were much divided in political opinions; and many of them, tired of the control of the Estates of Parliament, and disapproving of the bold measure which they had adopted, by sending into England a large army to the assistance of the Parliament, were determined on their part to embrace the earliest opportunity of declaring for the King, and making such a diversion as should at least compel the recall of General Leslie's army out of England, if it did not recover a great part of Scotland to the King's allegiance. This plan was chiefly adopted by the northern nobility, who had resisted with great obstinacy the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant, and by many of the chiefs of the Highland clans, who conceived their interest and authority to be connected with royalty, who had, besides, a decided aversion to the Presbyterian form of religion, and who, finally, were in that half-savage state of society in which war is always more welcome than peace.

Great commotions were generally expected to arise from these concurrent causes; and the trade of incursion and depredation which the Scotch Highlanders at all times exercised

upon the Lowlands began to assume a more steady, avowed, and systematic form, as part of a general military system.

Those at the head of affairs were not insensible to the peril of the moment, and anxiously made preparations to meet and to repel it. They considered, however, with satisfaction, that no leader or name of consequence had as yet appeared to assemble an army of Royalists, or even to direct the efforts of those desultory bands whom love of plunder, perhaps, as much as political principle had hurried into measures of hostility. It was generally hoped that the quartering a sufficient number of troops in the Lowlands adjacent to the Highland line would have the effect of restraining the mountain chieftains; while the power of various barons in the north who had espoused the Covenant, as, for example, the Earl Mareschal, the great families of Forbes, Leslie, and Irvine, the Grants, and other Presbyterian clans, might counterbalance and bridle not only the strength of the Ogilvies and other cavaliers of Angus and Kincardine, but even the potent family of the Gordons, whose extensive authority was only equalled by their extreme dislike to the Presbyterian model.

In the West Highlands the ruling party numbered many enemies; but the power of these disaffected clans was supposed to be broken, and the spirit of their chieftains intimidated, by the predominating influence of the Marquis of Argyle, upon whom the confidence of the Convention of Estates was reposed with the utmost security; and whose power in the Highlands, already exorbitant, had been still farther increased by concessions extorted from the King at the last pacification. It was indeed well known that Argyle was a man rather of political enterprise than personal courage, and better calculated to manage an intrigue of state than to control the tribes of hostile mountaineers; yet the numbers of his clan, and the spirit of the gallant gentlemen by whom it was led, might, it was supposed, atone for the personal deficiencies of their chief, and as the Campbells had already severely humbled several of the neighbouring tribes, it was supposed these would not readily again provoke an encounter with a body so powerful.

Thus having at their command the whole west and south of Scotland, indisputably the richest part of the kingdom, Fifeshire being in a peculiar manner their own, and possessing many and powerful friends even north of the Forth and Tay, the Scottish Convention of Estates saw no danger sufficient to induce them to alter the line of policy they had adopted, or to

recall from the assistance of their brethren of the English Parliament that auxiliary army of twenty thousand men, by means of which accession of strength the King's party had been reduced to the defensive, when in full career of triumph and success.

The causes which moved the Convention of Estates at this time to take such an immediate and active interest in the Civil War of England are detailed in our historians, but may be here shortly recapitulated. They had indeed no new injury or aggression to complain of at the hand of the King, and the peace which had been made between Charles and his subjects of Scotland had been carefully observed; but the Scottish rulers were well aware that this peace had been extorted from the King, as well by the influence of the Parliamentary party in England as by the terror of their own arms. It is true, King Charles had since then visited the capital of his ancient kingdom, had assented to the new organisation of the church, and had distributed honours and rewards among the leaders of the party which had shown themselves most hostile to his interests; but it was suspected that distinctions so unwillingly conferred would be resumed as soon as opportunity offered. The low state of the English Parliament was seen in Scotland with deep apprehension; and it was concluded that, should Charles triumph by force of arms against his insurgent subjects of England, he would not be long in exacting from the Scotch the vengeance which he might suppose due to those who had set the example of taking up arms against him. Such was the policy of the measure which dictated the sending the auxiliary army into England; and it was avowed in a manifesto explanatory of their reasons for giving this timely and important aid to the English Parliament. The English Parliament, they said, had been already friendly to them and might be so again; whereas the King, although he had so lately established religion among them according to their desires, had given them no ground to confide in his royal declaration, seeing they had found his promises and actions inconsistent with each other. 'Our conscience,' they concluded, 'and God, who is greater than our conscience, heareth us record that we aim altogether at the glory of God, peace of both nations, and honour of the King, in suppressing and punishing in a legal way those who are the troublers of Israel, the firebrands of hell, the Korahs, the Balaams, the Doegs, the Rabshakehs, the Hamans, the Tobiahs, the Sanballats of our time; which done, we are satisfied. Neither have

we begun to use a military expedition to England as a mean for compassing those our pious ends until all other means which we could think upon have failed us: and this alone is left to us, *ultimum et unicum remedium*, the last and only remedy.'

Leaving it to casuists to determine whether one contracting party is justified in breaking a solemn treaty upon the suspicion that, in certain future contingencies, it might be infringed by the other, we shall proceed to mention two other circumstances that had at least equal influence with the Scottish rulers and nation with any doubts which they entertained of the King's good faith.

The first of these was the nature and condition of their army: headed by a poor and discontented nobility, under whom it was officered chiefly by Scottish soldiers of fortune, who had served in the German wars until they had lost almost all distinction of political principle, and even of country, in the adoption of the mercenary faith that a soldier's principal duty was fidelity to the state or sovereign from whom he received his pay, without respect either to the justice of the quarrel or to their own connexion with either of the contending parties. To men of this stamp Grotius applies the severe character — *Nullum vitæ genus est improbius, quam eorum, qui sine causæ respectu mercede conducti militant.* To these mercenary soldiers, as well as to the needy gentry with whom they were mixed in command, and who easily imbibed the same opinions, the success of the late short invasion of England in 1641 was a sufficient reason for renewing so profitable an experiment. The good pay and free quarters of England had made a feeling impression upon the recollection of these military adventurers, and the prospect of again levying eight hundred and fifty pounds a-day came in place of all arguments, whether of state or of morality.

Another cause inflamed the minds of the nation at large, no less than the tempting prospect of the wealth of England animated the soldiery. So much had been written and said on either side concerning the form of church government that it had become a matter of infinitely more consequence in the eyes of the multitude than the doctrines of that Gospel which both churches had embraced. The Prelatists and Presbyterians of the more violent kind became as illiberal as the Papists, and would scarcely allow the possibility of salvation beyond the pale of their respective churches. It was in vain remarked to these zealots that, had the Author of our holy religion considered any peculiar form of church government as essential to salvation, it

would have been revealed with the same precision as under the Old Testament dispensation. Both parties continued as violent as if they could have pleaded the distinct commands of Heaven to justify their intolerance. Laud, in the days of his domination, had fired the train by attempting to impose upon the Scottish people church ceremonies foreign to their habits and opinions. The success with which this had been resisted, and the Presbyterian model substituted in its place, had endeared the latter to the nation, as the cause in which they had triumphed. The Solemn League and Covenant, adopted with such zeal by the greater part of the kingdom, and by them forced, at the sword's point, upon the others, bore in its bosom, as its principal object, the establishing the doctrine and discipline of the Presbyterian church, and the putting down all error and heresy; and, having attained for their own country an establishment of this golden candlestick, the Scots became liberally and fraternally anxious to erect the same in England. This they conceived might be easily attained by lending to the Parliament the effectual assistance of the Scottish forces. The Presbyterians, a numerous and powerful party in the English Parliament, had hitherto taken the lead in opposition to the King; while the Independents and other sectaries, who afterwards, under Cromwell, resumed the power of the sword and overset the Presbyterian model both in Scotland and England, were as yet contented to lurk under the shelter of the wealthier and more powerful party. The prospect of bringing to a uniformity the kingdoms of England and Scotland in discipline and worship seemed therefore as fair as it was desirable.

The celebrated Sir Henry Vane, one of the commissioners who negotiated the alliance betwixt England and Scotland, saw the influence which this bait had upon the spirits of those with whom he dealt; and, although himself a violent Independent, he contrived at once to gratify and to elude the eager desires of the Presbyterians by qualifying the obligation to reform the Church of England as a change to be executed 'according to the Word of God and the best Reformed churches.' Deceived by their own eagerness, themselves entertaining no doubts on the *jus divinum* of their own ecclesiastical establishments, and not holding it possible such doubts could be adopted by others, the Convention of Estates and the Kirk of Scotland conceived that such expressions necessarily inferred the establishment of Presbytery; nor were they undeceived until, when their help was no longer needful, the sectaries gave them to understand

that the phrase might be as well applied to Independency, or any other mode of worship which those who were at the head of affairs at the time might consider as agreeable 'to the Word of God and the practice of the Reformed churches.' Neither were the outwitted Scottish less astonished to find that the designs of the English sectaries struck against the monarchial constitution of Britain, it having been their intention to reduce the power of the king, but by no means to abrogate the office. They fared, however, in this respect like rash physicians, who commence by over-physicking a patient, until he is reduced to a state of weakness from which cordials are afterwards unable to recover him.

But these events were still in the womb of futurity. As yet the Scottish Parliament held their engagement with England consistent with justice, prudence, and piety, and their military undertaking seemed to succeed to their very wish. The junction of the Scottish army with those of Fairfax and Manchester enabled the Parliamentary forces to besiege York, and to fight the desperate action of Long Marston Moor, in which Prince Rupert and the Marquis of Newcastle were defeated. The Scottish auxiliaries, indeed, had less of the glory of this victory than their countrymen could desire. David Leslie, with their cavalry, fought bravely, and to them, as well as to Cromwell's brigade of Independents, the honour of the day belonged; but the old Earl of Leven, the Covenanting general, was driven out of the field by the impetuous charge of Prince Rupert, and was thirty miles distant, in full flight towards Scotland, when he was overtaken by the news that his party had gained a complete victory.

The absence of these auxiliary troops, upon this crusade for the establishment of Presbyterianism in England, had considerably diminished the power of the Convention of Estates in Scotland, and had given rise to those agitations among the anti-Covenanters which we have noticed at the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER II

His mother could for him as cradle set
Her husband's rusty iron corselet,
Whose jangling sound could hush her babe to rest,
That never plain'd of his uneasy nest;
Then did he dream of dreary wars at hand,
And woke, and fought, and won, ere he could stand.

HALL'S *Satires.*

IT was towards the close of a summer's evening, during the anxious period which we have commemorated, that a young gentleman of quality, well mounted and armed, and accompanied by two servants, one of whom led a sumpter-horse, rode slowly up one of those steep passes by which the Highlands are accessible from the Lowlands of Perthshire.[1] Their course had lain for some time along the banks of a lake, whose deep waters reflected the crimson beams of the western sun. The broken path which they pursued with some difficulty was in some places shaded by ancient birches and oak-trees, and in others overhung by fragments of huge rock. Elsewhere the hill, which formed the northern side of this beautiful sheet of water, arose in steep but less precipitous acclivity, and was arrayed in heath of the darkest purple. In the present times a scene so romantic would have been judged to possess the highest charms for the traveller; but those who journey in days of doubt and dread pay little attention to picturesque scenery.

The master kept, as often as the wood permitted, abreast of one or both of his domestics, and seemed earnestly to converse with them, probably because the distinctions of rank are readily set aside among those who are made to be sharers of common danger. The dispositions of the leading men who inhabit this wild country, and the probability of their taking part in the political convulsions that were soon expected, were the subjects of their conversation.

[1] The beautiful pass of Leny, near Callander, in Menteith, would, in some respects, answer the description.

They had not advanced above half-way up the lake, and the young gentleman was pointing to his attendants the spot where their intended road turned northwards, and, leaving the verge of the loch, ascended a ravine to the right hand, when they discovered a single horseman coming down the shore, as if to meet them. The gleam of the sunbeams upon his head-piece and corslet showed that he was in armour, and the purpose of the other travellers required that he should not pass unquestioned. 'We must know who he is,' said the young gentleman, 'and whither he is going.' And, putting spurs to his horse, he rode forward as fast as the rugged state of the road would permit, followed by his two attendants, until he reached the point where the pass along the side of the lake was intersected by that which descended from the ravine, securing thus against the possibility of the stranger eluding them by turning into the latter road before they came up with him.

The single horseman had mended his pace when he first observed the three riders advance rapidly towards him; but, when he saw them halt and form a front which completely occupied the path, he checked his horse and advanced with great deliberation: so that each party had an opportunity to take a full survey of the other. The solitary stranger was mounted upon an able horse, fit for military service, and for the great weight which he had to carry, and his rider occupied his demi pique or war-saddle with an air that showed it was his familiar seat. He had a bright burnished head-piece, with a plume of feathers, together with a cuirass, thick enough to resist a musket-ball, and a back-piece of lighter materials. These defensive arms he wore over a buff jerkin, along with a pair of gauntlets or steel gloves, the tops of which reached up to his elbow, and which, like the rest of his armour, were of bright steel. At the front of his military saddle hung a case of pistols, far beyond the ordinary size, nearly two feet in length, and carrying bullets of twenty to the pound. A buff belt, with a broad silver buckle, sustained on one side a long straight double-edged broadsword, with a strong guard and a blade calculated either to strike or push. On the right side hung a dagger of about eighteen inches in length; a shoulder-belt sustained at his back a musketoon or blunderbuss, and was crossed by a bandelier containing his charges of ammunition. Thigh-pieces of steel, then termed taslets, met the tops of his huge jack boots, and completed the equipage of a well-armed trooper of the period.

The appearance of the horseman himself corresponded well with his military equipage, to which he had the air of having been long inured. He was above the middle size, and of strength sufficient to bear with ease the weight of his weapons, offensive and defensive. His age might be forty and upwards, and his countenance was that of a resolute weatherbeaten veteran, who had seen many fields, and brought away in token more than one scar. At the distance of about thirty yards he halted and stood fast, raised himself on his stirrups, as if to reconnoitre and ascertain the purpose of the opposite party, and brought his musketoon under his right arm, ready for use, if occasion should require it. In everything but numbers he had the advantage of those who seemed inclined to interrupt his passage.

The leader of the party was, indeed, well mounted and clad in a buff coat, richly embroidered, the half-military dress of the period; but his domestics had only course jackets of thick felt, which could scarce be expected to turn the edge of a sword, if wielded by a strong man; and none of them had any weapons save swords and pistols, without which gentlemen or their attendants during those disturbed times seldom stirred abroad.

When they had stood at gaze for about a minute, the younger gentleman gave the challenge which was then common in the mouth of all strangers who met in such circumstances — 'For whom are you?'

'Tell me first,' answered the soldier, 'for whom are you? the strongest party should speak first.'

'We are for God and King Charles,' answered the first speaker. 'Now tell your faction; you know ours.'

'I am for God and my standard,' answered the single horseman.

'And for which standard?' replied the chief of the other party — 'Cavalier or Roundhead, King or Convention?'

'By my troth, sir,' answered the soldier, 'I would be loth to reply to you with an untruth, as a thing unbecoming a cavalier of fortune and a soldier. But, to answer your query with beseeming veracity, it is necessary I should myself have resolved to whilk of the present divisions of the kingdom I shall ultimately adhere, being a matter whereon my mind is not as yet precisely ascertained.'

'I should have thought,' answered the gentleman, 'that, when loyalty and religion are at stake, no gentleman or man of honour could be long in choosing his party.'

'Truly, sir,' replied the trooper, 'if ye speak this in the way

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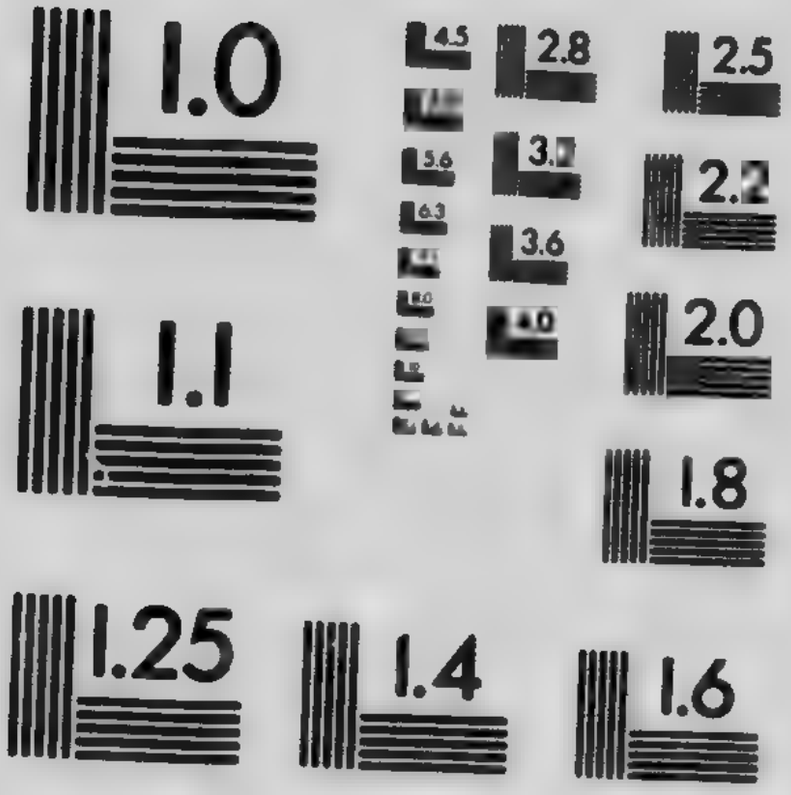

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of vituperation, as meaning to impugn my honour or genteelity, I would blythely put the same to issue, venturing in that quarrel with my single person against you three. But if you speak it in the way of logical ratiocination, whilk I have studied in my youth at the Marischal College of Aberdeen, I am ready to prove to ye *logicé* that my resolution to defer for a certain season the taking upon me either of these quarrels not only becometh me as a gentleman and a man of honour, but also as a person of sense and prudence, one imbued with humane letters in his early youth, and who from thenceforward has followed the wars under the banner of the invincible Gustavus, the Lion of the North, and under many other heroic leaders, both Lutheran and Calvinist, Papist and Arminian.'

After exchanging a word or two with his domestics, the younger gentleman replied, 'I should be glad, sir, to have some conversation with you upon so interesting a question, and should be proud if I can determine you in favour of the cause I have myself espoused. I ride this evening to a friend's house not three miles distant, whither, if you choose to accompany me, you shall have good quarters for the night, and free permission to take your own road in the morning, if you then feel no inclination to join with us.'

'Whose word am I to take for this?' answered the cautious soldier. 'A man must know his guarantee or he may fall into an ambuscade.'

'I am called,' answered the younger stranger, 'the Earl of Menteith, and I trust you will receive my honour as a sufficient security.'

'A worthy nobleman,' answered the soldier, 'whose parole is not to be doubted.' With one motion he replaced his musketoon at his back, and with another made his military salute to the young nobleman, and continuing to talk as he rode forward to join him—'And I trust,' said he, 'my own assurance that I will be *bon camarado* to your lordship in peace or in peril, during the time we shall abide together, will not be altogether vilipended in these doubtful times, when, as they say, a man's head is safer in a steel cap than in a marble palace.'

'I assure you, sir,' said Lord Menteith, 'that, to judge from your appearance, I most highly value the advantage of your escort: but I trust we shall have no occasion for any exercise of valour, as I expect to conduct you to good and friendly quarters.'

'Good quarters, my lord,' replied the soldier, 'are always

acceptable and are only to be postponed to good pay or good booty, not to mention the honour of a cavalier or the needful points of commanded duty. And truly, my lord, your noble proffer is not the less welcome in that I knew not preceesely this night where I and my poor companion (patting his horse) were to find lodgments.'

'May I be permitted to ask, then,' said Lord Menteith, 'to whom I have the good fortune to stand quartermaster?'

'Truly, my lord,' said the trooper, 'my name is Dalgetty—Dugald Dalgetty, Rittmaster Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, at your honourable service to command. It is a name you may have seen in *Gallo-Belgicus*, the *Swedish Intelligencer*, or, if you read High Dutch, in the *Fliegenden Mercœur* of Leipsic. My father, my lord, having by unthrifty courses reduced a fair patrimony to a nonentity, I had no better shift, when I was eighteen years auld, than to carry the learning whilk I had acquired at the Marischal College of Aberdeen, my gentle bluid and designation of Drumthwacket, together with a pair of stalwarth arms and legs conform, to the German wars, there to push my way as a cavalier of fortune. My lord, my legs and arms stood me in more stead than either my gentle kin or my book-lear, and I found myself trailing a pike as a private gentleman under old Sir Ludovick Leslie, where I learned the rules of service so tightly that I will not forget them in a hurry. Sir, I have been made to stand guard eight hours, being from twelve at noon to eight o'clock of the night, at the palace, armed with back and breast, head-piece and bracelets, being iron to the teeth, in a bitter frost, and the ice was as hard as ever was flint; and all for stopping an instant to speak to my landlady, when I should have gone to roll-call.'

'And, doubtless, sir,' replied Lord Menteith, 'you have gone through some hot service as well as this same cold duty you talk of?'

'Surely, my lord, it doth not become me to speak; but he that hath seen the fields of Leipsic and of Lutzen may be said to have seen pitched battles. And one who hath witnessed the intaking of Frankfort, and Spanheim, and Nuremberg, and so forth, should know somewhat about leaguers, storms, onslaughts, and outfalls.'

'But your merit, sir, and experience were doubtless followed by promotion?'

'It came slow, my lord—dooms slow,' replied Dalgetty: 'but, as my Scottish countrymen, the fathers of the war, and the

raisers of those valorous Scottish regiments that were the dread of Germany, began to fall pretty thick, what with pestilence and what with the sword, why we, their children, succeeded to their inheritance. Sir, I was six years first private gentleman of the company, and three years lance-spessade, disdaining to receive a halberd, as unbecoming my birth. Wherefore I was ultimately promoted to be a fahn-dragger, as the High Dutch call it — which signifies an ancient — in the King's Leif-Regiment of Black-Horse, and thereafter I arose to be lieutenant and rittmaster, under that invincible monarch, the Bulwark of the Protestant Faith, the Lion of the North, the terror of Austria, Gustavus the Victorious.'

'And yet, if I understand you, Captain Dalgetty, I think that rank corresponds with your foreign title of rittmaster——'

'The same grade preceesely,' answered Dalgetty; 'rittmaster signifying literally file-leader.'

'I was observing,' continued Lord Menteith, 'that, if I understood you right, you had left the service of this great Prince.'

'It was after his death — it was after his death, sir,' said Dalgetty, 'when I was in no shape bound to continue mine adherence. There are things, my lord, in that service that cannot but go against the stomach of any cavalier of honour. In especial, albeit the pay be none of the most superabundant, being only about sixty dollars a-month to a rittmaster, yet the invincible Gustavus never paid above one-third of that sum, whilk was distributed month by way of loan; although, when justly considered, it was, in fact, a borrowing by that great monarch of the additional two-thirds which were due to the soldier. And I have seen some whole regiments of Dutch and Holsteiners mutiny on the field of battle, like base scullions, crying out "Gelt, gelt," signifying their desire of pay, instead of falling to blows like our noble Scottish blades, who ever disdained, my lord, postponing of honour to filthy lucre.'

'But were not these arrears,' said Lord Menteith, 'paid to the soldiery at some stated period?'

'My lord,' said Dalgetty, 'I take it on my conscience that at no period, and by no possible process, could one creutzer of them ever be recovered. I myself never saw twenty dollars of my own all the time I served the invincible Gustavus, unless it was from the chance of a storm or victory, or the fetching in some town or doorp, when a cavalier of fortune, who knows the usage of wars, seldom faileth to make some small profit.'

'I begin rather to wonder, sir,' said Lord Mentieth, 'that

you should have continued so long in the Swedish service, than that you should have ultimately withdrawn from it.'

'Neither I should,' answered the Rittmaster; 'but that great leader, captain, and king, the Lion of the North, and the Bulwark of the Protestant Faith, had a way of winning battles, taking towns, overrunning countries, and levying contributions whilk made his service irresistibly delectable to all true-bred cavaliers who follow the noble profession of arms. Simple as I ride here, my lord, I have myself commanded the whole *stift* of Dunklespiel on the Lower Rhine, occupying the Palsgrave's palace, consuming his choice wines with my comrades, calling in contributions, requisitions, and caduacs, and not failing to lick my fingers, as became a good cook. But truly all this glory hastened to decay after our great master had been shot with three bullets on the field of Lutzen; wherefore, finding that Fortune had changed sides, that the borrowings and lendings went on as before out of our pay, while the caduacs and casualties were all cut off, I e'en gave up my commission and took service with Wallenstein in Walter Butler's Irish regiment.'

'And may I beg to know of you,' said Lord Menteith, apparently interested in the adventures of this soldier of fortune, 'how you liked this change of masters?'

'Indifferent well,' said the Captain — 'very indifferent well. I cannot say that the Emperor paid much better than the great Gustavus. For hard knocks, we had plenty of them. I was often obliged to run my head against my old acquaintances, the Swedish feathers, whilk your honour must conceive to be double-pointed stakes, shod with iron at each end, and planted before the squad of pikes to prevent an onfall of the cavalry. The whilk Swedish feathers, although they look gay to the eye, resembling the shrubs or lesser trees of ane forest, as the puissant pikes, arranged in batt[illegible] behind them, correspond to the tall pines thereof, yet, nevertheless, are not altogether so soft to encounter as the plumage of a goose. Howbeit, in despite of heavy blows and light pay, a cavalier of fortune may thrive indifferently well in the Imperial service, in respect his private casualties are nothing so closely looked to as by the Swede; and so that an officer did his duty on the field, neither Wallenstein nor Pappenheim, nor old Tilly before them, would likely listen to the objurgations of boors or burghers against any commander or soldado by whom they chanced to be somewhat closely shorn. So that an experienced cavalier, knowing how to [illegible], as our Scottish phrase runs, "the head of the sow to the

tail of the grice," might get out of the country the pay whilk he could not obtain from the Emperor.'

'With a full hand, sir, doubtless, and with interest?' said Lord Menteith.

'Indubitably, my lord,' answered Dalgetty, composedly; 'for it would be doubly disgraceful for any soldado of rank to have his name called in question for any petty delinquency.'

'And pray, sir,' continued Lord Menteith, 'what made you leave so gainful a service?'

'Why, truly, sir,' answered the soldier, 'an Irish cavalier, called O'Quilligan, being major of our regiment, and I having had words with him the night before respecting the worth and precedence of our several nations, it pleased him the next day to deliver his orders to me with the point of his batoon advanced and held aloof, instead of declining and trailing the same, as is the fashion from a courteous commanding officer towards his equal in rank, though, it may be, his inferior in military grade. Upon this quarrel, sir, we fought in private *rencontre*; and as, in the perquisitions which followed, it pleased Walter Butler, our *oberst*, or colonel, to give the lighter punishment to his countryman and the heavier to me, whereupon, ill-stomaching such partiality, I exchanged my commission for one under the Spaniard.'

'I hope you found yourself better off by the change?' said Lord Menteith.

'In good sooth,' answered the Rittmaster, 'I had but little to complain of. The pay was somewhat regular, being furnished by the rich Flemings and Walloons of the Low Country. The quarters were excellent; the good wheaten loaves of the Flemings were better than the provant rye-bread of the Swede, and Rhenish wine was more plenty with us than ever I saw the black beer of Rostock in Gustavus's camp. Service there was none; duty there was little, and that little we might do or leave undone at our pleasure: an excellent retirement for a cavalier somewhat weary of field and leaguer, who had purchased with his blood as much honour as might serve his turn, and was desirous of a little ease and good living.'

'And may I ask,' said Lord Menteith, 'why you, Captain, being, as I suppose, in the situation you describe, retired from the Spanish service also?'

'You are to consider, my lord, that your Spaniard,' replied Captain Dalgetty, 'is a person altogether unparalleled in his own conceit, wherethrough he maketh not fit account of such

foreign cavaliers of valour as are pleased to take service with him. And a galling thing it is to every honourable soldado to be put aside and postponed and obliged to yield preference to every puffing signor, who, were it the question which should first mount a breach at push of pike, might be apt to yield willing place to a Scottish cavalier. Moreover, sir, I was pricked in conscience respecting a matter of religion.'

'I should not have thought, Captain Dalgetty,' said the young nobleman, 'that an old soldier, who had changed service so often, would have been too scrupulous on that head.'

'No more I am, my lord,' said the Captain, 'since I hold it to be the duty of the chaplain of the regiment to settle those matters for me and every other brave cavalier, inasmuch as he does nothing else that I know of for his pay and allowances. But this was a particular case, my lord, a *casus improvisus*, as I may say, in whilk I had no chaplain of my own persuasion to act as my adviser. I found, in short, that, although my being a Protestant might be winked at, in respect that I was a man of action, and had more experience than all the dons in our *tertia* put together, yet, when in garrison, it was expected I should go to mass with the regiment. Now, my lord, as a true Scottish man, and educated at the Marischal College of Aberdeen, I was bound to uphold the mass to be an act of blinded papistry and utter idolatry, whilk I was altogether unwilling to homologate by my presence. True it is that I consulted on the point with a worthy countryman of my own, one Father Fatsides, of the Scottish convent in Wurtzburg - —'

'And I hope,' observed Lord Menteith, 'you obtained a clear opinion from this same ghostly father?'

'As clear as it could be,' replied Captain Dalgetty, 'considering we had drunk six flasks of Rhenish and about two mutchkins of *kirschenwasser*. Father Fatsides informed me that, as nearly as he could judge for a heretic like myself, it signified not much whether I went to mass or not, seeing my eternal perdition was signed and sealed at any rate, in respect of my impenitent and obdurate perseverance in my damnable heresy. Being discouraged by this response, I applied to a Dutch pastor of the Reformed Church, who told me he thought I might lawfully go to mass, in respect that the prophet permitted Naaman, a mighty man of valour, and an honourable cavalier of Syria, to follow his master into the house of Rimmon, a false god or idol to whom he had vowed service, and to bow down when the king was leaning upon his hand. But neither was

this answer satisfacto to me, both because there was an unco difference between an ...ounted king of Syria and our Spanish colonel, whom I could have blown away like the peeling of an ingan, and chiefly because I could not find the thing was required of me by any of the articles of war; neither was I proffered any consideration, either in perquisite or pay, for the wrong I might thereby do to my conscience.'

'So you again changed your service?' said Lord Menteith.

'In troth did I, my lord; and, after trying for a short while two or three other powers, I even took on for a time with their High Mightinesses the States of Holland.'

'And how did their service jump with your humour?' again demanded his companion.

'O! my lord,' said the soldier, in a sort of enthusiasm, 'their behaviour on pay-day might be a pattern to all Europe — no borrowings, no lendings, no offsets, no arrears — all balanced and paid like a banker's book. The quarters, too, are excellent, and the allowances unchallengeable; but then, sir, they are a preceese, scrupulous people, and will allow nothing for peccadilloes. So that if a boor complains of a broken head, or a beer-seller of a broken can, or a daft wench does but squeak loud enough to be heard above her breath, a soldier of honour shall be dragged, not before his own court-martial, who can best judge of and punish his demerits, but before a base mechanical burgomaster, who shall menace him with the rasp-house, the cord, and what not, as if he were one of their own mean, amphibious, twenty-breeched boors. So, not being able to dwell longer among those ungrateful plebeians, who, although unable to defend themselves by their proper strength, will nevertheless allow the noble foreign cavalier who engages with them nothing beyond his dry wages, which no honourable spirit will put in competition with a liberal license and honourable countenance, I resolved to leave the service of the Mynheers. And hearing at this time, to my exceeding satisfaction, that there is something to be doing this summer in my way in this my dear native country, I am come hither, as they say, like a beggar to a bridal, in order to give my loving countrymen the advantage of that experience which I have acquired in foreign parts. So your lordship has an outline of my brief story, excepting my deportment in those passages of action in the field, in leaguers, storms, and onslaughts, which would be wearisome to narrate, and might, peradventure, better befit any other tongue than mine own.'

CHAPTER III

For pleas of right let statesmen vex their head,
Battle 's my business, and my guerdon bread;
And, with the sworded Switzer, I can say,
The best of causes is the best of pay.

DONNE.

THE difficulty and narrowness of the road had by this time become such as to interrupt the conversation of the travellers, and Lord Menteith, reining back his horse, held a moment's private conversation with his domestics. The Captain, who now led the van of the party, after about a quarter of a mile's slow and toilsome advance up a broken and rugged ascent, emerged into an upland valley, to which a mountain stream acted as a drain, and afforded sufficient room upon its greensward banks for the travellers to pursue their journey in a more social manner.

Lord Menteith accordingly resumed the conversation, which had been interrupted by the difficulties of the way. 'I should have thought,' said he to Captain Dalgetty, 'that a cavalier of your honourable mark, who hath so long followed the valiant King of Sweden, and entertains such a suitable contempt for the base mechanical States of Holland, would not have hesitated to embrace the cause of King Charles in preference to that of [illegible]n, roundheaded, canting knaves who are in rebellion [illegible] authority?'

'[illegible]ak reasonably, my lord,' said Dalgetty, 'and, *ceteris* [illegible], I might be induced to see the matter in the same light. but, my lord, there is a southern proverb — "Fine words butter no parsnips." I have heard enough since I came here to satisfy me that a cavalier of honour is free to take any part in this civil embroilment whilk he may find most convenient for his own peculiar. "Loyalty" is your password, my lord: "Liberty," roars another chield from the other side of the strath: "The King," shouts one war-cry: "The Parliament," roars another:

"Montrose for ever," cries Donald, waving his bonnet; "Argyle and Leven," cries a south-country Saunders, vapouring with his hat and feather; "Fight for the bishops," says a priest, with his gown and rochet; "Stand stout for the Kirk," cries a minister, in a Geneva cap and band — good watchwords all — excellent watchwords. Whilk cause is the best I cannot say. But sure am I that I have fought knee-deep in blood many a day for one that was ten degrees worse than the worst of them all.'

'And pray, Captain Dalgetty,' said his lordship, 'since the pretensions of both parties seem to you so equal, will you please to inform us by what circumstances your preference will be determined?'

'Simply upon two considerations, my lord,' answered the soldier, 'being, first, on which side my services would be in most honourable request; and, secondly, whilk is a corollary of the first, by whilk party they are likely to be most gratefully requited. And, to deal plainly with you, my lord, my opinion at present doth on both points rather incline to the side of the Parliament.'

'Your reasons, if you please,' said Lord Menteith, 'and perhaps I may be able to meet them with some others which are more powerful.'

'Sir, I shall be amenable to reason,' said Captain Dalgetty, 'supposing it addresses itself to my honour and my interest. Well, then, my lord, here is a sort of Highland host assembled, or expected to assemble, in these wild hills, in the King's behalf. Now, sir, you know the nature of our Highlanders. I will not deny them to be a people stout in body and valiant in heart, and courageous enough in their own wild way of fighting, which is as remote from the usages and discipline of war as ever was that of the ancient Scythians or of the salvage Indians of America that now is. They have na mair mickle as a German whistle or a drum to beat a march, an alarm, a charge, a retreat, a reveille, or the tattoo, or any other point of war: and their damnable skirlin' pipes, whilk they themselves pretend to understand, are unintelligible to the ears of any *cavaliero* accustomed to civilised warfare. So that, were I undertaking to discipline such a breechless mob, it were impossible for me to be understood; and if I were understood, judge ye, my lord, what chance I had of being obeyed among a band of half salvages, who are accustomed to pay to their own lairds and chiefs, allenarly, that respect and obedience whilk ought to be paid to commissionate officers. If I were teaching them to form

battalia by extracting the square root, that is, by forming your square battalion of equal number of men of rank and file, corresponding to the square root of the full number present, what return could I expect for communicating this golden secret of military tactic except it may be a dirk in my wame, on placing some M'Alister More, M'Shemei, or Capperfae in the flank or rear when he claimed to be in the van? Truly, well saith Holy Writ, "If ye cast pearls before swine, they will turn again and rend ye."'

'I believe, Anderson,' said Lord Menteith, looking back to one of his servants, for both were close behind him, 'you can assure this gentleman we shall have more occasion for experienced officers, and be more disposed to profit by their instructions, than he seems to be aware of.'

'With your honour's permission,' said Anderson, respectfully raising his cap, 'when we are joined by the Irish infantry, who are expected, and who should be landed in the West Highlands before now, we shall have need of good soldiers to discipline our levies.'

'And I should like well, very well, to be employed in such service,' said Dalgetty. 'The Irish are pretty fellows — very pretty fellows; I desire to see none better in the field. I once saw a brigade of Irish, at the taking of Frankfort upon the Oder, stand to it with sword and pike until they beat off the blue and yellow Swedish brigades, esteemed as stout as any that fought under the immortal Gustavus. And although stout Hepburn, valiant Lumsdale, courageous Monro, with myself and other cavaliers, made entry elsewhere at point of pike, yet, had we all met with such opposition, we had returned with great loss and little profit. Wherefore these valiant Irishes, being all put to the sword, as is usual in such cases, did nevertheless gain immortal praise and honour; so that, for their ... es, I have always loved and honoured those of that natio ... t to my own country of Scotland.'

'A command of Irish,' said Menteith, 'I think I could almost promise you, should you be disposed to embrace the royal cause.'

'And yet,' said Captain Dalgetty, 'my second and greatest difficulty remains behind: for, although I hold it a mean and sordid thing for a soldado to have nothing in his mouth but pay and gelt, like the base cullions, the German lanzknechts, whom I mentioned before; and although I will maintain it with my sword that honour is to be preferred before pay, free

quarters, and arrears, yet, *ex contrario*, a soldier's pay being the counterpart of his engagement of service, it becomes a wise and considerate cavalier to consider what remuneration he is to receive for his service, and from what funds it is to be paid. And truly, my lord, from what I can see and hear, the Convention are the purse-masters. The Highlanders, indeed, may be kept in humour by allowing them to steal cattle; and for the Irishes, your lordship and your noble associates may, according to the practice of the wars in such cases, pay them as seldom or as little as may suit your pleasure or convenience; but the same mode of treatment doth not apply to a cavalier like me, who must keep up his horses, servants, arms, and equipage, and who neither can nor will go to warfare upon his own charges.'

Anderson, the domestic who had before spoken, now respectfully addressed his master. 'I think, my lord,' he said, 'that, under your lordship's favour, I could say something to remove Captain Dalgetty's second objection also. He asks us where we are to collect our pay; now, in my poor mind, the resources are as open to us as to the Covenanters. They tax the country according to their pleasure, and dilapidate the estates of the King's friends; now, were we once in the Lowlands, with our Highlanders and our Irish at our backs, and our swords in our hands, we can find many a fat traitor whose ill-gotten wealth shall fill our military chest and satisfy our soldiery. Besides, confiscations will fall in thick; and, in giving donations of forfeited lands to every adventurous cavalier who joins his standard, the King will at once reward his friends and punish his enemies. In short, he that joins these Roundhead dogs may get some miserable pittance of pay; he that joins our standard has a chance to be knight, lord, or earl, if luck serve him.'

'Have you ever served, my good friend?' said the Captain to the spokesman.

'A little, sir, in these our domestic quarrels,' answered the man, modestly.

'But never in Germany or the Low Countries?' said Dalgetty.

'I never had the honour,' answered Anderson.

'I profess,' said Dalgetty, addressing Lord Menteith, 'your lordship's servant has a sensible, natural, pretty idea of military matters; somewhat irregular, though, and smells a little too much of selling the bear's skin before he has hunted him. I will take the matter, however, into my consideration.'

'Do so, Captain,' said Lord Menteith; 'you will have the night to think of it, for we are now near the house where I hope to ensure you a hospitable reception.'

'And that is what will be very welcome' said the Captain, 'for I have tasted no food since daybreak but a farl of oat cake, which I divided with my horse. So I have been fain to draw my sword-belt three bores tighter for very extenuation, lest hunger and heavy iron should make the gird slip.'

CHAPTER IV

Once on a time, no matter when
Some glunimies met in a glen ;
As deft and tight as ever wore
A durk, a targe, and a claymore,
Short hose, and belted plaid or trews,
In Uist, Lochaber, Skye, or Lewes,
Or cover'd hard head with his bonnet ;
Had you but known them, you would own it.

MESTON.

A HILL was now before the travellers, covered with an ancient forest of Scottish firs, the topmost of which, flinging their scathed branches across the western horizon, gleamed ruddy in the setting sun. In the centre of this wood rose the towers, or rather the chimneys, of the house, or castle, as it was called, destined for the end of their journey.

As usual at that period, one or two high-ridged narrow buildings, intersecting and crossing each other, formed the *corps de logis*. A projecting bartizan or two, with the addition of small turrets at the angles, much resembling pepper-boxes, had procured for Darnlinvarach [1] the dignified appellation of a castle. It was surrounded by a low courtyard wall, within which were the usual offices.

As the travellers approached more nearly, they discovered marks of recent additions to the defences of the place, which had been suggested, doubtless, by the insecurity of those troublesome times. Additional loopholes for musketry were struck out in different parts of the building and of its surrounding wall. The windows had just been carefully secured by stanchions of iron, crossing each other athwart and end long, like the grates of a prison. The door of the courtyard was shut ; and it was only after cautious challenge that one of its leaves was opened by two domestics, both strong Highlanders, and both under arms, like Bitias and Pandarus in the *Æneid*,

[1] Supposed to represent Ardvoirlich Castle, on Loch Earn, Perthshire (*Laing*).

ready to defend the entrance if aught hostile had ventured an intrusion.

When the travellers were admitted into the court, they found additional preparations for defence. The walls were scaffolded for the use of firearms, and one or two of the small guns called sackers or falcons were mounted at the angles and flanking turrets.

More domestics, both in the Highland and Lowland dress, instantly rushed from the interior of the mansion, and some hastened to take the horses of the strangers, while others waited to marshal them a way into the dwelling-house. But Captain Dalgetty refused the proffered assistance of those who wished to relieve him of the charge of his horse. 'It is my custom, my friends, to see Gustavus – for so I have called him, after my invincible master – accommodated myself; we are old friends and fellow-travellers, and, as I often need the use of his legs, I always lend him in my turn the service of my tongue to call for whatever he has occasion for'; and accordingly he strode into the stable after his steed without farther apology.

Neither Lord Menteith nor his attendants paid the same attention to their horses, but, leaving them to the proffered care of the servants of the place, walked forward into the house, where a sort of dark vaulted vestibule displayed, among other miscellaneous articles, a huge barrel of twopenny ale, beside which were ranged two or three wooden queichs or bickers, ready, it would appear, for the service of whoever thought proper to employ them. Lord Menteith applied himself to the spigot, drank without ceremony, and then handed the stoup to Anderson, who followed his master's example, but not until he had flung out the drop of ale which remained, and slightly rinsed the wooden cup.

'What the deil, man,' said an old Highland servant belonging to the family, 'can she no drink after her ain master without washing the cup and spilling the ale, and be tammed to her!'

'I was bred in France,' answered Anderson, 'where nobody drinks after another out of the same cup, unless it be after a young lady.'

'The teil's in their nicety!' said Donald; 'and if the ale be gude, fat the waur is't that another man's beard's been in the queich before ye?'

Anderson's companion drank without observing the ceremony which had given Donald so much offence, and both of them followed their master into the low-arched stone hall, which was

the common rendezvous of a Highland family. A large fire of peats in the huge chimney at the upper end shed a dim light through the apartment, and was rendered necessary by the damp, by which, even during the summer, the apartment was rendered uncomfortable. Twenty or thirty targets, as many claymores, with dirks, and plaids, and guns, both matchlock and firelock, and long-bows, and cross-bows, and Lochaber axes, and coats of plate armour, and steel bonnets, and head-pieces, and the more ancient habergeons, or shirts of reticulated mail, with hood and sleeves corresponding to it, all hung in confusion about the walls, and would have formed a month's amusement to a member of a modern antiquarian society. But such things were too familiar to attract much observation on the part of the present spectators.

There was a large clumsy oaken table, which the hasty hospitality of the domestic who had before spoken immediately spread with milk, butter, goat-milk cheese, a flagon of beer, and a flask of usquebaugh, designed for the refreshment of Lord Menteith; while an inferior servant made similar preparations at the bottom of the table for the benefit of his attendants. The space which intervened between them was, according to the manners of the times, sufficient distinction between master and servant, even though the former was, as in the present instance, of high rank. Meanwhile the guests stood by the fire — the young nobleman under the chimney, and his servants at some little distance.

'What do you think, Anderson,' said the former, 'of our fellow-traveller?'

'A stout fellow,' replied Anderson, 'if all be good that is apcome. I wish we had twenty such, to put our Teagues into some sort of discipline.'

'I differ from you, Anderson,' said Lord Menteith; 'I think this fellow Dalgetty is one of those horse-leeches, whose appetite for blood being only sharpened by what he has sucked in foreign countries, he is now returned to batten upon that of his own. Shame on the pack of these mercenary swordsmen! They have made the name of Scot through all Europe equivalent to that of a pitiful mercenary, who knows neither honour nor principle but his month's pay, who transfers his allegiance from standard to standard at the pleasure of fortune or the highest bidder, and to whose insatiable thirst for plunder and warm quarters we owe much of that civil dissension which is now turning our swords against our own bowels. I had scarce

patience with the hired gladiator, and yet could hardly help laughing at the extremity of his impudence.'

'Your lordship will forgive me,' said Anderson, 'if I recommend to you, in the present circumstances, to conceal at least a part of this generous indignation; we cannot, unfortunately, do our work without the assistance of those who act on baser motives than our own. We cannot spare the assistance of such fellows as our friend the soldado. To use the canting phrase of the saints in the English Parliament, the sons of Zeruiah are still too many for us.'

'I must dissemble, then, as well as I can,' said Lord Menteith, 'as I have hitherto done, upon your hint. But I wish the fellow at the devil with all my heart.'

'Ay, but still you must remember, my lord,' resumed Anderson, 'that to cure the bite of a scorpion you must crush another scorpion on the wound. But stop, we shall be overheard.'

From a side door in the hall glided a Highlander into the apartment, whose lofty stature and complete equipment, as well as the eagle's feather in his bonnet and the confidence of his demeanour, announced to be a person of superior rank. He walked slowly up to the table, and made no answer to Lord Menteith, who, addressing him by the name of Allan, asked him how he did.

'Ye manna speak to her e'en now,' whispered the old attendant.

The tall Highlander, sinking down upon the empty settle next the fire, fixed his eyes upon the red embers and the huge heap of turf, and seemed buried in profound abstraction. His dark eyes and wild and enthusiastic features bore the air of one who, deeply impressed with his own subjects of med'tation, pays little attention to exterior objects. An air of gloomy severity, the fruit perhaps of ascetic and solitary habits, might, in a Lowlander, have been ascribed to religious fanaticism; but by that disease of the mind, then so common both in England and the Lowlands of Scotland, the Highlanders of this period were rarely infected. They had, however, their own peculiar superstitions, which overclouded the mind with thick-coming fancies as completely as the Puritanism of their neighbours.

'His lordship's honour,' said the Highland servant, sideling up to Lord Menteith, and speaking in a very low tone — 'his lordship manna speak to Allan even now, for the cloud is upon his mind.'

Lord Menteith nodded, and took no farther notice of the reserved mountaineer.

'Said I not,' asked the latter, suddenly raising his stately person upright and looking at the domestic — 'said I not that four were to come, and here stand but three on the hall floor?'

'In troth did ye say sae, Allan,' said the old Highlander, 'and here 's the fourth man coming clinking in at the yett e'en now from the stable, for he 's shelled like a partan, wi' airn on back and breast, haunch and shanks. And am I to set her chair up near the Menteith's, or down wi' the honest gentlemen at the foot of the table?'

Lord Menteith himself answered the inquiry by pointing to a seat beside his own.

'And here she comes,' said Donald, as Captain Dalgetty entered the hall; 'and I hope gentlemens will all take bread and cheese, as we say in the glens, until better meat be ready — until the Tiernach comes back frae the hill wi' the southern gentlefolk, and then Dugald Cook will show himself wi' his kid and hill venison.'

In the meantime, Captain Dalgetty had entered the apartment, and, walking up to the seat placed next Lord Menteith, was leaning on the back of it with his arms folded. Anderson and his companion waited at the bottom of the table, in a respectful attitude, until they should receive permission to seat themselves; while three or four Highlanders, under the direction of old Donald, ran hither and thither to bring additional articles of food, or stood still to give attendance upon the guests.

In the midst of these preparations Allan suddenly started up, and, snatching a lamp from the hand of an attendant, held it close to Dalgetty's face, while he perused his features with the most heedful and grave attention.

'By my honour,' said Dalgetty, half-displeased, as, mysteriously shaking his head, Allan gave up the scrutiny, 'I trow that lad and I will ken each other when we meet again.'

Meanwhile Allan strode to the bottom of the table, and having, by the aid of his lamp, subjected Anderson and his companion to the same investigation, stood a moment as if in deep reflection; then, touching his forehead, suddenly seized Anderson by the arm, and, before he could offer any effectual resistance, half-led and half-dragged him to the vacant seat at the upper end, and having made a mute intimation that he should there place himself, he hurried the soldado with the

same unceremonious precipitation to the bottom of the table. The Captain, exceedingly incensed at this freedom, endeavoured to shake Allan from him with violence; but, powerful as he was, he proved in the struggle inferior to the gigantic mountaineer, who threw him off with such violence that, after reeling a few paces, he fell at full length, and the vaulted hall rang with the clash of his armour. When he arose, his first action was to draw his sword and to fly at Allan, who, with folded arms, seemed to await his onset with the most scornful indifference. Lord Menteith and his attendants interposed to preserve peace, while the Highlanders, snatching weapons from the wall, seemed prompt to increase the broil.

'He is mad,' whispered Lord Menteith — 'he is perfectly mad; there is no purpose in quarrelling with him.'

'If your lordship is assured that he is *non compos mentis*,' said Captain Dalgetty, 'the whilk his breeding and behaviour seem to testify, the matter must end here, seeing that a madman can neither give an affront nor render honourable satisfaction. But, by my saul, if I had my provant and a bottle of Rhenish under my belt, I should have stood otherways up to him. And yet it 's a pity he should be sae weak in the intellectuals, being a strong proper man of body, fit to handle pike, morgenstern,[1] or any other military implement whatsoever.'

Peace was thus restored, and the party seated themselves agreeably to their former arrangement, with which Allan, who had now returned to his settle by the fire, and seemed once more immersed in meditation, did not again interfere. Lord Menteith, addressing the principal domestic, hastened to start some theme of conversation which might obliterate all recollection of the fray that had taken place. 'The Laird is at the hill then, Donald, I understand, and some English strangers with him?'

'At the hill he is, an it like your honour, and two Saxon caiabaleros are with him, sure enough: and that is Sir Miles Musgrave and Christopher Hall, both from the Cumraik, as I think they call their country.'

'Hall and Musgrave?' said Lord Menteith, looking at his attendants, 'the very men that we wished to see.'

'Troth,' said Donald, 'an' I wish I had never seen them between the een, for they 're come to herry us out o' house and ha'.'

[1] See Note 1.

'Why, Donald,' said Lord Menteith, 'you did not use to be so churlish of your beef and ale; southland though they be, they'll scarce eat up all the cattle that 's going on the castle mains.'

'Teil care an they did,' said Donald, 'an that were the warst o't, for we have a wheen canny trewsmen here that wadna let us want if there was a horned beast atween this and Perth. But this is a warse job: it 's nae less than a wager.'

'A wager!' repeated Lord Menteith, with some surprise.

'Troth,' continued Donald, to the full as eager to tell his news as Lord Menteith was curious to hear them, 'as your lordship is a friend and kinsman o' the house, an' as ye 'll hear eneugh o't in less than an hour, I may as weel tell ye mysell. Ye sall be pleased then to know that, when our Laird was up in England, where he gangs oftener than his friends can wish, he was biding at the house o' this Sir Miles Musgrave, an' there was putten on the table six candlesticks, that they tell me were twice as muckle as the candlesticks in Dunblane kirk, and neither airn, brass, nor tin, but a' solid silver, nae less — up wi' their English pride, has sae muckle, and kens sae little how to guide it! Sae they began to jeer the Laird, that he saw nae sic graith in his ain poor country; and the Laird, scorning to hae his country put down without a word for its credit, swore, like a gude Scotsman, that he had mair candlesticks, and better candlesticks, in his ain castle at hame, than were ever lighted in a hall in Cumberland, an Cumberland be the name o' the country.'

'That was patriotically said,' observed Lord Menteith.

'Fary true,' said Donald; 'but her honour had better hae hauden her tongue; for, if ye say ony thing amang the Saxons that 's a wee by ordinar, they clink ye down for a wager as fast as a Lowland smith would hammer shoon on a Highland shelty. An' so the Laird behoved either to gae back o' his word or wager twa hunder merks; and so he e'en took the wager, rather than be shamed wi' the like o' them. And now he 's like to get it to pay, and I 'm thinking that 's what makes him sae swear to come hame at e'en.'

Indeed,' said Lord Menteith, 'from my idea of your family plate, Donald, your master is certain to lose such a wager.'

'Your honour may swear that; an' where he 's to get the siller I kenna, although he borrowed out o' twenty purses. I advised him to pit the twa Saxon gentlemen and their servants

cannily into the pit o' the tower till they gae up the bargain o' free gude-will, but the Laird winna hear reason.'

Allan here started up, strode forward, and interrupted the conversation, saying to the domestic in a voice like thunder, 'And how dared you to give my brother such dishonourable advice? or how dare you to say he will lose this or any other wager which it is his pleasure to lay?'

'Troth, Allan M'Aulay,' answered the old man, 'it 's no for my father's son to gainsay what your father's son thinks fit to say, an' so the Laird may no doubt win his wager. A' that I ken against it is, that the teil a candlestick, or ony thing like it, is in the house, except the auld airn branches that hae been here since Laird Kenneth's time, and the tin sconces that your father garr'd be made by auld Willie Winkie the tinkler, mair be token that deil an unce of siller plate is about the house at a', forbye the lady's auld posset dish, that wants the cover and ane o' the lugs.'

'Peace, old man!' said Allan, fiercely; 'and do you, gentlemen, if your refection is finished, leave this apartment clear; I must prepare it for the reception of these southern guests.'

'Come away,' said the domestic, pulling Lord Menteith by the sleeve; 'his hour is on him,' said he, looking towards Allan, 'and he will not be controlled.'

They left the hall accordingly, Lord Menteith and the Captain being ushered one way by old Donald, and the two attendants conducted elsewhere by another Highlander. The former had scarcely reached a sort of withdrawing apartment ere they were joined by the lord of the mansion, Angus M'Aulay by name, and his English guests. Great joy was expressed by all parties, for Lord Menteith and the English gentlemen were well known to each other; and on Lord Menteith's introduction Captain Dalgetty was well received by the Laird. But, after the first burst of hospitable congratulation was over, Lord Menteith could observe that there was a shade of sadness on the brow of his Highland friend.

'You must have heard,' said Sir Christopher Hall, 'that our fine undertaking in Cumberland is all blown up. The militia would not march into Scotland, and your prick-ear'd Covenanters have been too hard for our friends in the southern shires. And so, understanding there is some stirring work here, Musgrave and I, rather than sit idle at home, are come to have a campaign among your kilts and plaids.'

'I hope you have brought arms, men, and money with you,' said Lord Menteith, smiling.

'Only some dozen or two of troopers, whom we left at the last Lowland village,' said Musgrave, 'and trouble enough we had to get them so far.'

'As for money,' said his companion, 'we expect a small supply from our friend and host here.'

The Laird now, colouring highly, took Menteith a little apart, and expressed to him his regret that he had fallen into a foolish blunder.

'I heard it from Donald,' said Lord Menteith, scarce able to suppress a smile.

'Devil take that old man,' said M'Aulay, 'he would tell everything, were it to cost one's life; but it 's no jesting matter to you neither, my lord, for I reckon on your friendly and fraternal benevolence, as a near kinsman of our house, to help me out with the money due to these pock-puddings; or else, to be plain wi' ye, the deil a M'Aulay will there be at the muster, for curse me if I do not turn Covenanter rather than face these fellows without paying them; and, at the best, I shall be ill enough off, getting both the skaith and the scorn.'

'You may suppose, cousin,' said Lord Menteith, 'I am not too well equipt just now: but you may be assured I shall endeavour to help you as well as I can, for the sake of old kindred, neighbourhood, and alliance.'

'Thank ye — thank ye — thank ye,' reiterated M'Aulay; 'and, as they are to spend the money in the King's service, what signifies whether you, they, or I pay it? we are a' one man's bairns, I hope? But you must help me out too with some reasonable excuse, or else I shall be for taking to Andrew Ferrara; for I like not to be treated like a liar or a braggart at my own board-end, when, God knows, I only meant to support my honour and that of my family and country.'

Donald, as they were speaking, entered with rather a blyther face than he might have been expected to wear, considering the impending fate of his master's purse and credit. 'Gentlemens, her dinner is ready, *and her candles are lighted too*,' said Donald, with a strong guttural emphasis on the last clause of his speech.

'What the devil can he mean?' said Musgrave, looking to his countryman.

Lord Menteith put the same question with his eyes to the Laird, which M'Aulay answered by shaking his head.

A short dispute about precedence somewhat delayed their leaving the apartment. Lord Menteith insisted upon yielding up that which belonged to his rank, on consideration of his being in his own country, and of his near connexion with the family in which they found themselves. The two English strangers, therefore, were first ushered into the hall, where an unexpected display awaited them. The large oaken table was spread with substantial joints of meat, and seats were placed in order for the guests. Behind every seat stood a gigantic Highlander, completely dressed and armed after the fashion of his country, holding in his right hand his drawn sword with the point turned downwards, and in the left a blazing torch made of the bog-pine. This wood, found in the morasses, is so full of turpentine that, when split and dried, it is frequently used in the Highlands instead of candles. The unexpected and somewhat startling apparition was seen by the red glare of the torches, which displayed the wild features, unusual dress, and glittering arms of those who bore them, while the smoke, eddying up to the roof of the hall, over canopied them with a volume of vapour. Ere the strangers had recovered from their surprise, Allan stept forward and, pointing with his sheathed broadsword to the torch-bearers, said, in a deep and stern tone of voice, 'Behold, gentlemen cavaliers, the chandeliers of my brother's house, the ancient fashion of our ancient name. Not one of these men knows any law but their Chief's command. Would you dare to compare to THEM in value the richest ore that ever was dug out of the mine? How say you, cavaliers? is your wager won or lost?'

'Lost, lost,' said Musgrave, gaily; 'my own silver candlesticks are all melted and riding on horseback by this time, and I wish the fellows that enlisted were half as trusty as these. Here, sir,' he added to the Chief, 'is your money; it impairs Hall's finances and mine somewhat, but debts of honour must be settled.'

'My father's curse upon my father's son,' said Allan, interrupting him, 'if he receive from you one penny! It is enough that you claim no right to exact from him what is his own.'

Lord Menteith eagerly supported Allan's opinion, and the elder M'Aulay readily joined, declaring the whole to be a fool's business, and not worth speaking more about. The Englishmen, after some courteous opposition, were persuaded to regard the whole as a joke.

'And now, Allan,' said the Laird, 'please to remove your candles; for, since the Saxon gentlemen have seen them, they will eat their dinner as comfortably by the light of the old tin sconces, without scomfishing them with so much smoke.'

Accordingly, at a sign from Allan, the living chandeliers, recovering their broadswords and holding the point erect, marched out of the hall and left the guests to enjoy their refreshment.[1]

[1] Such a bet as that mentioned in the text is said to have been taken by MacDonald of Keppoch, who extricated himself in the manner here narrated.

CHAPTER V

Thereby so fearlesse and so fell he grew,
That his own syre and maister of his guise
Did often tremble at his horrid view;
And oft for dread of hurt would him advise,
The angry beastes not rashly to despise,
Nor too much to provoke; for he would learne
The lyon stoup to him in lowly wise,
(A lesson hard), and make the libbard sterne
Leave roaring, when in rage he for revenge did earne.

SPENSER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the proverbial epicurism of the English — proverbial, that is to say, in Scotland at the period — the English visitors made no figure whatever at the entertainment compared with the portentous voracity of Captain Dalgetty, although that gallant soldier had already displayed much steadiness and pertinacity in his attack upon the lighter refreshment set before them at their entrance by way of forlorn hope. He spoke to no one during the time of his meal; and it was not until the victuals were nearly withdrawn from the table that he gratified the rest of the company, who had watched him with some surprise, with an account of the reasons why he ate so very fast and so very long.

'The former quality,' he said, 'he had acquired while he filled a place at the bursar's table at the Marischal College of Aberdeen; when,' said he, 'if you did not move your jaws as fast as a pair of castanets, you were very unlikely to get anything to put between them. And as for the quantity of my food, be it known to this honourable company,' continued the Captain, 'that it's the duty of every commander of a fortress, on all occasions which offer, to secure as much munition and victuals as their magazines can possibly hold, not knowing when they may have to sustain a siege or a blockade; upon which principle, gentlemen,' said he, 'when a cavalier finds that provant is good and abundant, he will, in my estimation, do wisely

to victual himself for at least three days, as there is no knowing when he may come by another meal.'

The Laird expressed his acquiescence in the prudence of this principle, and recommended to the veteran to add a tass of brandy and a flagon of claret to the substantial provisions he had already laid in, to which proposal the Captain readily agreed.

When dinner was removed and the servants had withdrawn, excepting the Laird's page or henchman, who remained in the apartment to call for or bring whatever was wanted, or, in a word, to answer the purposes of a modern bell-wire, the conversation began to turn upon politics and the state of the country; and Lord Menteith inquired anxiously and particularly what clans were expected to join the proposed muster of the King's friends.

'That depends much, my lord, on the person who lifts the banner,' said the Laird; 'for you know we Highlanders, when a few clans are assembled, are not easily commanded by one of our own Chiefs, or, to say the truth, by any other body. We have heard a rumour, indeed, that Colkitto — that is, young Colkitto, or Alaster M'Donnell — is come over the kyle from Ireland with a body of the Earl of Antrim's people, and that they had got as far as Ardnamurchan. They might have been here before now, but I suppose they loitered to plunder the country as they came along.'

'Will Colkitto not serve you for a leader, then?' said Lord Menteith.

'Colkitto!' said Allan M'Aulay, scornfully; 'who talks of Colkitto? There lives but one man whom we will follow, and that is Montrose.'

'But Montrose, sir,' said Sir Christopher Hall, 'has not been heard of since our ineffectual attempt to rise in the north of England. It is thought he has returned to the King at Oxford for farther instructions.'

'Returned!' said Allan, with a scornful laugh; 'I could tell ye, but it is not worth my while; ye will know soon enough.'

'By my honour, Allan,' said Lord Menteith, 'you will weary out your friends with this intolerable, froward, and sullen humour. But I know the reason,' added he, laughing; 'you have not seen Annot Lyle to-day.'

'Whom did you say I had not seen?' said Allan, sternly.

'Annot Lyle, the fairy queen of song and minstrelsy,' said Lord Menteith.

'Would to G . I were never to see her again,' said Allan, sighing, 'on condition the same weird were laid on you!'

'And why on me?' said Lord Menteith, carelessly.

'Because,' said Allan, 'it is written on your forehead that you are to be the ruin of each other.' So saying, he rose up and left the room.

'Has he been long in this way?' asked Lord Menteith, addressing his brother.

'About three days,' answered Angus; 'the fit is well-nigh over, he will be better to morrow. But come, gentlemen, don't let the tappit-hen scraugh to be emptied. The King's health — King Charles's health! and may the Covenanting dog that refuses it go to Heaven by the road of the Grassmarket!'

The health was quickly pledged, and as fast succeeded by another nd another and another, all of a party cast, and enforced in an earnest manner. Captain Dalgetty, however, thought it necessary to enter a protest.

'Gentlemen cavaliers,' he said, 'I drink these healths, *primo*, both out of respect to this honourable and hospitable roof-tree, and, *secundo*, because I hold it not good to be precease in such matters, *inter pocula*; but I protest, agreeable to the warrandice granted by this honourable lord, that it shall be free to me, notwithstanding my present complaisance, to take service with the Covenanters to-morrow, providing I shall be so minded.'

M'Aulay and his English guests stared at this declaration, which would have certainly bred new disturbance if Lord Menteith had not taken up the affair and explained the circumstances and conditions. 'I trust,' he concluded, 'we shall be able to secure Captain Dalgetty's assistance to our own party.'

'And if not,' said the Laird, 'I protest, as the Captain says, that nothing that has passed this evening, not even his h ing eaten my bread and salt, and pledged me in brandy, Bourneaux, or usquebaugh, shall prejudice my cleaving him to the neck-bone.'

'You shall be heartily welcome,' said the Captain, 'providing my sword cannot keep my head, which it has done in worse dangers than your feud is likely to make for me.'

Here Lord Menteith again interposed, and the concord of the company being with no small difficulty restored, was cemented by some deep carouses. Lord Menteith, however, contrived to break up the party earlier than was the usage of the castle, under pretence of fatigue and indisposition. This

was somewhat to the disappointment of the valiant Captain, who, among other habits acquired in the Low Countries, had acquired both a disposition to drink and a capacity to bear an exorbitant quantity of strong liquors.

Their landlord ushered them in person to a sort of sleeping gallery, in which there was a four-post bed, with tartan curtains, and a number of cribs, or long hampers, placed along the wall, three of which, well stuffed with blooming heather, were prepared for the reception of guests.

'I need not tell your lordship,' said M'Aulay to Lord Menteith, a little apart, 'our Highland mode of quartering; only that, not liking you should sleep in the room alone with this German landlouper, I have caused your servants' beds to be made here in the gallery. By G—d, my lord, these are times when men go to bed with a throat hale and sound as ever swallowed brandy, and before next morning it may be gaping like an oyster-shell.'

Lord Menteith thanked him sincerely, saying, 'It was just the arrangement he would have requested; for, although he had not the least apprehension of violence from Captain Dalgetty, yet Anderson was a better kind of person, a sort of gentleman, whom he always liked to have near his person.'

'I have not seen this Anderson,' said M'Aulay; 'did you hire him in England?'

'I did so,' said Lord Menteith; 'you will see the man to-morrow; in the meantime I wish you good-night.'

His host left the apartment after the evening salutation, and was about to pay the same compliment to Captain Dalgetty, but, observing him deeply engaged in the discussion of a huge pitcher filled with brandy posset, he thought it a pity to disturb him in so laudable an employment, and took his leave without farther ceremony.

Lord Menteith's two attendants entered the apartment almost immediately after his departure. The good Captain, who was now somewhat encumbered with his good cheer, began to find the undoing of the clasps of his armour a task somewhat difficult, and addressed Anderson in these words, interrupted by a slight hiccup — 'Anderson, my good friend, you may read in Scripture that he that putteth off his armour should not boast himself like he that putteth it on. I believe that is not the right word of command; but the plain truth of it is, I am like to sleep in my corslet, like many an honest fellow that never waked again, unless you unloose this buckle.'

'Undo his armour, Sibbald,' said Anderson to the other servant.

'By St. Andrew!' exclaimed the Captain, turning round in great astonishment, 'here's a common fellow, a stipendiary with four pounds a-year and a livery cloak, thinks himself too good to serve Rittmaster Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, who has studied humanity at the Marischal College of Aberdeen, and served half the princes of Europe!'

'Captain Dalgetty,' said Lord Menteith, whose lot it was to stand peacemaker throughout the evening, 'please to understand that Anderson waits upon no one but myself: but I will help Sibbald to undo your corslet with much pleasure.'

'Too much trouble for you, my lord,' said Dalgetty; 'and yet it would do you no harm to practise how a handsome harness is put on and put off. I can step in and out of mine like a glove; only to-night, although not *ebrius*, I am, in the classic phrase, *vino ciboque gravatus*.'

By this time he was unshelled, and stood before the fire musing with a face of drunken wisdom on the events of the evening. What seemed chiefly to interest him was the character of Allan M'Aulay. 'To come over the Englishmen so cleverly with his Highland torch-bearers — eight bare-breeched Rories for six silver candlesticks! it was a masterpiece — a *tour de passe* — it was perfect legerdemain; and to be a madman after all! I doubt greatly, my lord (shaking his head), that I must allow him, notwithstanding his relationship to your lordship, the privileges of a rational person, and either batoon him sufficiently to expiate the violence offered to my person, or else bring it to a matter of mortal arbitrement, as becometh an insulted cavalier.'

'If you care to hear a long story,' said Lord Menteith, 'at this time of night, I can tell you how the circumstances of Allan's birth account so well for his singular character as to put such satisfaction entirely out of the question.'

'A long story, my lord,' said Captain Dalgetty, 'is, next to a good evening draught and a warm nightcap, the best shoeing-horn for drawing on a sound sleep. And, since your lordship is pleased to take the trouble to tell it, I shall rest your patient and obliged auditor.'

'Anderson,' said Lord Menteith, 'and you, Sibbald, are dying to hear, I suppose, of this strange man too; and I believe I must indulge your curiosity, that you may know how to behave to him in time of need. You had better step to the fire then.'

Having thus assembled an audience about him, Lord Menteith sat down upon the edge of the four-post bed, while Captain Dalgetty, wiping the relics of the posset from his beard and mustachios, and repeating the first verse of the Lutheran psalm, *Alle guter Geister loben den Herrn*, etc., rolled himself into one of the places of repose, and, thrusting his shock pate from between the blankets, listened to Lord Menteith's relation in a most luxurious state, between sleeping and waking.

'The father,' said Lord Menteith, 'of the two brothers, Angus and Allan M'Aulay, was a gentleman of consideration and family, being the chief of a Highland clan, of good account, though not numerous; his lady, the mother of these young men, was a gentlewoman of good family, if I may be permitted to say so of one nearly connected with my own. Her brother, an honourable and spirited young man, obtained from James VI. a grant of forestry and other privileges over a royal chase adjacent to this castle; and, in exercising and defending these rights, he was so unfortunate as to involve himself in a quarrel with some of our Highland freebooters or caterans, of whom I think, Captain Dalgetty, you must have heard.'

'And that I have,' said the Captain, exerting himself to answer the appeal. 'Before I left the Marischal College of Aberdeen, Dugald Garr was playing the devil in the Garioch, and the Farquharsons on Dee-side, and the Clan Chattan on the Gordons' lands, and the Grants and Camerons in Moray land. And since that I have seen the Cravats and Pandours in Pannonia and Transylvania, and the Cossacks from the Polish frontier, and robbers, banditti, and barbarians of all countries besides, so that I have a distinct idea of your broken Highlandmen.'

'The clan,' said Lord Menteith, 'with whom the maternal uncle of the M'Aulays had been placed in feud was a small sept of banditti, called, from their houseless state and their incessantly wandering among the mountains and glens, the Children of the Mist. They are a fierce and hardy people, with all the irritability and wild and vengeful passions proper to men who have never known the restraint of civilised society. A party of them lay in wait for the unfortunate warden of the forest, surprised him while hunting alone and unattended, and slew him with every circumstance of inventive cruelty. They cut off his head, and resolved, in a bravado, to exhibit it at the castle of his brother-in-law. The Laird was absent, and the

lady reluctantly received as guests men against whom, perhaps, she was afraid to shut her gates. Refreshments were placed before the Children of the Mist, who took an opportunity to take the head of their victim from the plaid in which it was wrapt, placed it on the table, put a piece of bread between the lifeless jaws, bidding them do their office now, since many a good meal they had eaten at that table. The lady, who had been absent for some household purpose, entered at this moment, and, upon beholding her brother's head, fled like an arrow out of the house into the woods, uttering shriek upon shriek. The ruffians, satisfied with this savage triumph, withdrew. The terrified menials, after overcoming the alarm to which they had been subjected, sought their unfortunate mistress in every direction, but she was nowhere to be found. The miserable husband returned next day, and, with the assistance of his people, undertook a more anxious and distant search, but to equally little purpose. It was believed universally that, in the ecstasy of her terror, she must either have thrown herself over one of the numerous precipices which overhang the river or into a deep lake about a mile from the castle. Her loss was the more lamented as she was six months advanced in her pregnancy; Angus M'Aulay, her eldest son, having been born about eighteen months before. But I tire you, Captain Dalgetty, and you seem inclined to sleep.'

'By no means,' answered the soldier; 'I am no whit somnolent. I always hear best with my eyes shut; it is a fashion I learned when I stood sentinel.'

'And I daresay,' said Lord Menteith, aside to Anderson, 'the weight of the halberd of the sergeant of the rounds often made him open them.'

Being apparently, however, in the humour of story-telling, the young nobleman went on, addressing himself chiefly to his servants, without minding the slumbering veteran.

'Every baron in the country,' said he, 'now swore revenge for this dreadful crime. They took arms with the relations and brother-in-law of the murdered person, and the Children of the Mist were hunted down, I believe, with as little mercy as they had themselves manifested. Seventeen heads, the bloody trophies of their vengeance, were distributed among the allies, and fed the crows upon the gates of their castles. The survivors sought out more distant wildernesses, to which they retreated.'

'To your right hand, counter-march and retreat to your

former ground,' said Captain Dalgetty, the military phrase having produced the correspondent word of command; and then, starting up, professed he had been profoundly attentive to every word that had been spoken.

'It is the custom in summer,' said Lord Menteith, without attending to his apology, 'to send the cows to the upland pastures to have the benefit of the grass; and the maids of the village and of the family go there to milk them in the morning and evening. While thus employed, the females of this family, to their great terror, perceived that their motions were watched at a distance by a pale, thin, meagre figure, bearing a strong resemblance to their deceased mistress, and passing, of course, for her apparition. When some of the boldest resolved to approach this faded form, it fled from them into the woods with a wild shriek. The husband, informed of this circumstance, came up to the glen with some attendants, and took his measures so well as to intercept the retreat of the unhappy fugitive, and to secure the person of his unfortunate lady, though her intellect proved to be totally deranged. How she supported herself during her wandering in the woods could not be known; some supposed she lived upon roots and wild berries, with which the woods at that season abounded, but the greater part of the vulgar were satisfied that she must have subsisted upon the milk of the wild does, or been nourished by the fairies, or supported in some manner equally marvellous. Her reappearance was more easily accounted for. She had seen from the thicket the milking of the cows, to superintend which had been her favourite domestic employment, and the habit had prevailed even in her deranged state of mind.

'In due season the unfortunate lady was delivered of a boy, who not only showed no appearance of having suffered from his mother's calamities, but appeared to be an infant of uncommon health and strength. The unhappy mother after her confinement recovered her reason — at least in a great measure — but never her health and spirits. Allan was her only joy. Her attention to him was unremitting; and unquestionably she must have impressed upon his early mind many of those superstitious ideas to which his moody and enthusiastic temper gave so ready a reception. She died when he was about ten years old. Her last words were spoken to him in private; but there is little doubt that they conveyed an injunction of vengeance upon the Children of the Mist, with which he has since amply complied.

'From this moment the habits of Allan M'Aulay were totally changed. He had hitherto been his mother's constant companion, listening to her dreams and repeating his own, and feeding his imagination, which, probably from the circumstances preceding his birth, was constitutionally deranged, with all the wild and terrible superstitions so common to the mountaineers, to which his unfortunate mother had become much addicted since her brother's death. By living in this manner, the boy had gotten a timid, wild, startled look, loved to seek out solitary places in the woods, and was never so much terrified as by the approach of children of the same age. I remember, although some years younger, being brought up here by my father upon a visit, nor can I forget the astonishment with which I saw this infant hermit shun every attempt I made to engage him in the sports natural to our age. I can remember his father bewailing his disposition to mine, and alleging, at the same time, that it was impossible for him to take from his wife the company of the boy, as he seemed to be the only consolation that remained to her in this world, and as the amusement which Allan's society afforded her seemed to prevent the recurrence, at least in its full force, of that fearful malady by which she had been visited. But, after the death of his mother, the habits and manners of the boy seemed at once to change. It is true he remained as thoughtful and serious as before; and long fits of silence and abstraction showed plainly that his disposition in this respect was in no degree altered. But at other times he sought out the rendezvous of the youth of the clan, which he had hitherto seemed anxious to avoid. He took share in all their exercises; and, from his very extraordinary personal strength, soon excelled his brother and other youths whose age considerably exceeded his own. They, who had hitherto held him in contempt, now feared if they did not love him; and, instead of Allan's being esteemed a dreaming, womanish, and feeble-minded boy, those who encountered him in sports or military exercise now complained that, when heated by the strife, he was too apt to turn game into earnest, and to forget that he was only engaged in a friendly trial of strength. But I speak to regardless ears,' said Lord Menteith, interrupting himself, for the Captain's nose now gave the most indisputable signs that he was fast locked in the arms of oblivion.

'If you mean the ears of that snorting swine, my lord,' said Anderson, 'they are, indeed, shut to anything that you can say;

nevertheless, this place being unfit for more private conference, I hope you will have the goodness to proceed, for Sibbald's benefit and for mine. The history of this poor young fellow has a deep and wild interest in it.'

'You must know, then,' proceeded Lord Menteith, 'that Allan continued to increase in strength and activity till his fifteenth year, about which time he assumed a total independence of character and impatience of control which much alarmed his surviving parent. He was absent in the woods for whole days and nights, under pretence of hunting, though he did not always bring home game. His father was the more alarmed because several of the Children of the Mist, encouraged by the increasing troubles of the state, had ventured back to their old haunts, nor did he think it altogether safe to renew any attack upon them. The risk of Allan, in his wanderings, sustaining injury from these vindictive freebooters was a perpetual source of apprehension.

'I was myself upon a visit to the castle when this matter was brought to a crisis. Allan had been absent since daybreak in the woods, where I had sought for him in vain; it was a dark stormy night, and he did not return. His father expressed the utmost anxiety, and spoke of detaching a party at the dawn of morning in quest of him; when, as we were sitting at the supper-table, the door suddenly opened and Allan entered the room with a proud, firm, and confident air. His intractability of temper, as well as the unsettled state of his mind, had such an influence over his father that he suppressed all other tokens of displeasure excepting the observation that I had killed a fat buck, and had returned before sunset, while he supposed Allan, who had been on the hill till midnight, had returned with empty hands. "Are you sure of that?" said Allan, fiercely; "here is something will tell you another tale."

'We now observed his hands were bloody, and that there were spots of blood on his face, and waited the issue with impatience; when suddenly, undoing the corner of his plaid, he rolled down on the table a human head, bloody and new severed, saying at the same time, "Lie thou where the head of a better man lay before ye." From the haggard features, and matted red hair and beard, partly grizzled with age, his father and others present recognised the head of Hector of the Mist, a well known leader among the outlaws, redoubted for strength and ferocity, who had been active in the murder of the unfortunate forester, uncle to Allan, and had escaped by a desperate

defence and extraordinary agility when so many of his companions were destroyed. We were all, it may be believed, struck with surprise, but Allan refused to gratify our curiosity; and we only conjectured that he must have overcome the outlaw after a desperate struggle, because we discovered that he had sustained several wounds from the contest. All measures were now taken to ensure him against the vengeance of the freebooters; but neither his wounds nor the positive command of his father, nor even the locking of the gates of the castle and the doors of his apartment, were precautions adequate to prevent Allan from seeking out the very persons to whom he was peculiarly obnoxious. He made his escape by night from the window of the apartment, and, laughing at his father's vain care, produced on one occasion the head of one, and upon another those of two, of the Children of the Mist. At length these men, fierce as they were, became appalled by the inveterate animosity and audacity with which Allan sought out their recesses. As he never hesitated to encounter any odds, they concluded that he must bear a charmed life, or fight under the guardianship of some supernatural influence. Neither gun, dirk, nor dourlach, they said, availed aught against him. They imputed this to the remarkable circumstances under which he was born; and at length five or six of the stoutest caterans of the Highlands would have fled at Allan's halloo or the blast of his horn.

'In the meanwhile, however, the Children of the Mist carried on their old trade, and did the M'Aulays, as well as their kinsmen and allies, as much mischief as they could. This provoked another expedition against the tribe, in which I had my share; we surprised them effectually by besetting at once the upper and under passes of the country, and made such clean work as is usual on these occasions, burning and slaying right before us. In this terrible species of war even the females and the helpless do not always escape. One little maiden alone, who smiled upon Allan's drawn dirk, escaped his vengeance upon my earnest entreaty. She was brought to the castle and here bred up under the name of Annot Lyle, the most beautiful little fairy certainly that ever danced upon a heath by moonlight. It was long ere Allan could endure the presence of the child, until it occurred to his imagination, from her features perhaps, that she did not belong to the hated blood of his enemies, but had become their captive in some of their incursions; a circumstance not in itself impossible, but in

which he believes as firmly as in Holy Writ. He is particularly delighted by her skill in music, which is so exquisite that she far exceeds the best performers in this country in playing on the clairshack or harp. It was discovered that this produced upon the disturbed spirits of Allan in his gloomiest moods beneficial effects similar to those experienced by the Jewish monarch of old; and so engaging is the temper of Annot Lyle, so fascinating the innocence and gaiety of her disposition, that she is considered and treated in the castle rather as the sister of the proprietor than as a dependant upon his charity. Indeed, it is impossible for any one to see her without being deeply interested by the ingenuity, liveliness, and sweetness of her disposition.'

'Take care, my lord,' said Anderson, smiling; 'there is danger in such violent commendations. Allan M'Aulay, as your lordship describes him, would prove no very safe rival.'

'Pooh! pooh!' said Lord Menteith, laughing, yet blushing at the same time. 'Allan is not accessible to the passion of love; and for myself,' said he, more gravely, 'Annot's unknown birth is a sufficient reason against serious designs, and her unprotected state precludes every other.'

'It is spoken like yourself, my lord,' said Anderson. 'But I trust you will proceed with your interesting story.'

'It is well-nigh finished,' said Lord Menteith; 'I have only to add that from the great strength and courage of Allan M'Aulay, from his energetic and uncontrollable disposition, and from an opinion generally entertained and encouraged by himself, that he holds communion with supernatural beings, and can predict future events, the clan pay a much greater degree of deference to him than even to his brother, who is a bold-hearted rattling Highlander, but with nothing which can possibly rival the extraordinary character of his younger brother.'

'Such a character,' said Anderson, 'cannot but have the deepest effect on the minds of a Highland host. We must secure Allan, my lord, at all events. What between his bravery and his second-sight ——'

'Hush!' said Lord Menteith, 'that owl is awaking.'

'Do you talk of the second-sight or *deuteroscopia?*' said the soldier. 'I remember memorable Major Monro telling me how Murdoch Mackenzie, born in Assint, a private gentleman in a company and a pretty soldier, foretold the death of Donald Tough, a Lochaber man, and certain other persons, as well as

the hurt of the major himself at a sudden onfall at the siege of Trailsund.'

'I have often heard of this faculty,' observed Anderson, 'but I have always thought those pretending to it were either enthusiasts or impostors.'

'I should be loth,' said Lord Menteith, 'to apply either character to my kinsman, Allan M'Aulay. He has shown on many occasions too much acuteness and sense, of which you this night had an instance, for the character of an enthusiast; and his high sense of honour and manliness of disposition free him from the charge of imposture.'

'Your lordship, then,' said Anderson, 'is a believer in his supernatural attributes?'

'By no means,' said the young nobleman; 'I think that he persuades himself that the predictions which are in reality the result of judgment and reflection are supernatural impressions on his mind, just as fanatics conceive the workings of their own imagination to be divine inspiration; at least, if this will not serve you, Anderson, I have no better explanation to give; and it is time we were all asleep after the toilsome journey of the day.'

CHAPTER VI

Coming events cast their shadows before.
CAMPBELL.

AT an early hour in the morning the guests of the castle sprung from their repose; and, after a moment's private conversation with his attendants, Lord Menteith addressed the soldier, who was seated in a corner burnishing his corslet with rot-stone and shamois-leather, while he hummed the old song in honour of the victorious Gustavus Adolphus:

When cannons are roaring, and bullets are flying,
The lad that would have honour, boys, must never fear dying.

'Captain Dalgetty,' said Lord Menteith, 'the time is come that we must part or become comrades in service.'

'Not before breakfast, I hope?' said Captain Dalgetty.

'I should have thought,' replied his lordship, 'that your garrison was victualled for three days at least.'

'I have still some stowage left for beef and bannocks,' said the Captain; 'and I never miss a favourable opportunity of renewing my supplies.'

'But,' said Lord Menteith, 'no judicious commander allows either flags of truce or neutrals to remain in his camp longer than is prudent; and therefore we must know your mind exactly, according to which you shall either have a safe-conduct to depart in peace or be welcome to remain with us.'

'Truly,' said the Captain, 'that being the case, I will not attempt to protract the capitulation by a counterfeited parley — a thing excellently practised by Sir James Ramsay at the siege of Hanau, in the year of God 1636 — but I will frankly own that, if I like your pay as well as your provant and your company, I care not how soon I take the oath to your colours.'

'Our pay,' said Lord Menteith, 'must at present be small, since it is paid out of the common stock raised by the few

amongst us who can command some funds. As major and adjutant, I dare not promise Captain Dalgetty more than half a dollar a-day.'

'The devil take all halves and quarters!' said the Captain; 'were it in my option, I could no more consent to the halving of that dollar than the woman in the Judgment of Solomon to the disseverment of the child of her bowels.'

'The parallel will scarce hold, Captain Dalgetty, for I think you would rather consent to the dividing of the dollar than give it up entire to your competitor. However, in the way of arrears, I may promise you the other half-dollar at the end of the campaign.'

'Ah! these arrearages!' said Captain Dalgetty, 'that are always promised and always go for nothing! Spain, Austria, and Sweden all sing one song. Oh! long life to the Hoganmogans! if they were no officers or soldiers, they were good paymasters. And yet, my lord, if I could but be made certiorate that my natural hereditament of Drumthwacket had fallen into possession of any of these loons of Covenanters, who could be, in the event of our success, conveniently made a traitor of, I have so much value for that fertile and pleasant spot that I would e'en take on with you for the campaign.'

'I can resolve Captain Dalgetty's question,' said Sibbald, Lord Menteith's second attendant; 'for, if his estate of Drumthwacket be, as I conceive, the long waste moor so called that lies five miles south of Aberdeen, I can tell him it was lately purchased by Elias Strachan, as rank a rebel as ever swore the Covenant.'

'The crop-eared hound!' said Captain Dalgetty, in a rage; 'what the devil gave him the assurance to purchase the inheritance of a family of four hundred years' standing? *Cynthius aurem vellit*, as we used to say at Marischal College; that is to say, I will pull him out of my father's house by the ears. And so, my Lord Menteith, I am yours, hand and sword, body and soul, till death do us part, or to the end of the next campaign, whichever event shall first come to pass.'

'And I,' said the young nobleman, 'rivet the bargain by a month's pay in advance.'

'That is more than necessary,' said Dalgetty, pocketing the money however. 'But now I must go down, look after my war-saddle and abuilyiements, and see that Gustavus has his morning, and tell him we have taken new service.'

'There goes your precious recruit,' said Lord Menteith to Anderson, as the Captain left the room; 'I fear we shall have little credit of him.'

'He is a man of the times, however,' said Anderson; 'and without such we should hardly be able to carry on our enterprise.'

'Let us go down,' answered Lord Menteith, 'and see how our muster is likely to thrive, for I hear a good deal of bustle in the castle.'

When they entered the hall, the domestics keeping modestly in the background, morning greetings passed between Lord Menteith, Angus M'Aulay, and his English guests, while Allan, occupying the same settle which he had filled the preceding evening, paid no attention whatever to any one.

Old Donald hastily rushed into the apartment. 'A message from Vich Alister More;[1] he is coming up in the evening.'

'With how many attendants?' said M'Aulay.

'Some five-and-twenty or thirty,' said Donald, 'his ordinary retinue.'

'Shake down plenty of straw in the great barn,' said the Laird.

Another servant here stumbled hastily in, announcing the expected approach of Sir Hector M'Lean, 'who is arriving with a large following.'

'Put them in the malt-kiln,' said M'Aulay; 'and keep the breadth of the middenstead between them and the M'Donalds; they are but unfriends to each other.'

Donald now re-entered, his visage considerably lengthened. 'The teil 's i' the folk,' he said; 'the haill Hielands are asteer, I think. Evan Dhu of Lochiel will be here in an hour, with Lord kens how many gillies.'

'Into the great barn with them beside the M'Donalds,' said the Laird.

More and more chiefs were announced, the least of whom would have accounted it derogatory to his dignity to stir without a retinue of six or seven persons. To every new annunciation Angus M'Aulay answered by naming some place of accommodation — the stables, the loft, the cow-house, the sheds, every domestic office, were destined for the night to some hospitable purpose or other. At length the arrival of M'Dougal of Lorn, after all his means of accommodation were exhausted, reduced him to some perplexity. 'What the devil is to be

[1] The patronymic of M'Donnell or M'Donald of Glengarry.

done, Donald?' said he. 'The great barn would hold fifty more, if they would lie heads and thraws; but there would be drawn dirks amang them which should lie uppermost, and so we should have bloody puddings before morning!'

'What needs all this?' said Allan, starting up and coming forward with the stern abruptness of his usual manner; 'are the fiael to-day of softer flesh or whiter blood than their fathers were? Knock the head out of a cask of usquebaugh: let that be their night-gear, their plaids their bed-clothes, the blue sky their canopy, and the heather their couch. Come a thousand more, and they would not quarrel on the broad heath for want of room!'

'Allan is right,' said his brother. 'It is very odd how Allan, who, between ourselves,' said he to Musgrave, 'is a little wowf, seems at times to have more sense than us all put together. Observe him now.'

'Yes,' continued Allan, fixing his eyes with a ghastly stare upon the opposite side of the hall, 'they may well begin as they are to end; many a man will sleep this night upon the heath, that, when the Martinmas wind shall blow, shall lie there stark enough, and reck little of cold or lack of covering.'

'Do not forespeak us, brother,' said Angus; 'that is not lucky.'

'And what luck is it then that you expect?' said Allan; and, straining his eyes until they almost started from their sockets, he fell with a convulsive shudder into the arms of Donald and his brother, who, knowing the nature of his fits, had come near to prevent his fall. They seated him upon a bench, and supported him until he came to himself and was about to speak.

'For God's sake, Allan,' said his brother, who knew the impression his mystical words were likely to make on many of the guests, 'say nothing to discourage us.'

'Am I he who discourages you?' said Allan; 'let every man face his weird as I shall face mine. That which must come, will come; and we shall stride gallantly over many a field of victory ere we reach yon fatal slaughter-place or tread yon sable scaffolds.'

'What slaughter-place? what scaffolds?' exclaimed several voices; for Allan's renown as a seer was generally established in the Highlands.

'You will know that but too soon,' answered Allan. 'Speak to me no more, I am weary of your questions.' He then pressed

his hand against his brow, rested his elbow upon his knee, and sunk into a deep reverie.

'Send for Annot Lyle and the harp,' said Angus, in a whisper, to his servant; 'and let those gentlemen follow me who do not fear a Highland breakfast.'

All accompanied their hospitable landlord excepting only Lord Menteith, who lingered in one of the deep embrasures formed by the windows of the hall. Annot Lyle shortly after glided into the room, not ill-described by Lord Menteith as being the lightest and most fairy figure that ever trode the turf by moonlight. Her stature, considerably less than the ordinary size of women, gave her the appearance of extreme youth, insomuch that, although she was near eighteen, she might have passed for four years younger. Her figure, hands, and feet, were formed upon a model of exquisite symmetry with the size and lightness of her person, so that Titania herself could scarce have found a more fitting representative. Her hair was a dark shade of the colour usually termed flaxen, whose clustering ringlets suited admirably with her fair complexion, and with the playful yet simple expression of her features. When we add to these charms that Annot, in her orphan state, seemed the gayest and happiest of maidens, the reader must allow us to claim for her the interest of almost all who looked on her. In fact, it was impossible to find a more universal favourite, and she often came among the rude inhabitants of the castle, as Allan himself, in a poetical mood, expressed it, 'like a sunbeam on a sullen sea,' communicating to all others the cheerfulness that filled her own mind.

Annot, such as we have described her, smiled and blushed when, on entering the apartment, Lord Menteith came from his place of retirement and kindly wished her good-morning.

'And good-morning to you, my lord,' returned she, extending her hand to her friend; 'we have seldom seen you of late at the castle, and now I fear it is with no peaceful purpose.'

'At least, let me not interrupt your harmony, Annot,' said Lord Menteith, 'though my arrival may breed discord elsewhere. My cousin Allan needs the assistance of your voice and music.'

'My preserver,' said Annot Lyle, 'has a right to my poor exertions; and you, too, my lord — you, too, are my preserver, and were the most active to save a life that is worthless enough unless it can benefit my protectors.'

So saying, she sate down at a little distance upon the bench on which Allan M'Aulay was placed, and, tuning her clairshach, a small harp, about thirty inches in height, she accompanied it with her voice. The air was an ancient Gaelic melody, and the words, which were supposed to be very old, were in the same language; but we subjoin a translation of them by Secundus Macpherson, Esq., of Glenforgen, which, although submitted to the fetters of English rhythm, we trust will be found nearly as genuine as the version of Ossian by his celebrated namesake

Bird of evening dark and foul,
Night-crow, raven, bat, and owl,
Leave the sick man to his dream —
All night long he heard your scream —
Haste to cave and ruin'd tower,
Ivy-tod, or dingled bower,
There to wink and mope, for, hark!
In the mid air sings the lark.

Hie to moorish gills and rocks,
Prowling wolf and wily fox;
Hie you fast, nor turn your view,
Though the lamb bleats to the ewe.
Couch your trains, and speed your flight,
Safety parts with parting night;
And on distant echo borne,
Comes the hunter's early horn.

The moon's wan crescent scarcely gleams,
Ghost-like she fades in morning beams;
Hie hence each peevish imp and fay,
That scare the pilgrim on his way.
Quench, kelpy! quench, in bog and fen,
Thy torch that cheats benighted men;
Thy dance is o'er, thy reign is done,
For Benyieglo hath seen the sun.

Wild thoughts, that, sinful, dark, and deep,
O'erpower the passive mind in sleep,
Pass from the slumberer's soul away,
Like night-mists from the brow of day:
Foul hag, whose blasted visage grim
Smothers the pulse, unnerves the limb,
Spur thy dark palfrey, and begone!
Thou darest not face the godlike sun.

As the strain proceeded, Allan M'Aulay gradually gave signs of recovering his presence of mind and attention to the objects around him. The deep-knit furrows of his brow relaxed and smoothed themselves; and the rest of his features, which had

seemed contorted with internal agony, relapsed into a more natural state. When he raised his head and sat upright, his countenance, though still deeply melancholy, was divested of its wildness and ferocity; and in its composed state, although by no means handsome, the expression of his features was striking, manly, and even noble. His thick brown eyebrows, which had hitherto been drawn close together, were now slightly separated as in the natural state; and his grey eyes, which had rolled and flashed from under them with an unnatural and portentous gleam, now recovered a steady and determined expression.

'Thank God!' he said, after sitting silent for about a minute, until the very last sounds of the harp had ceased to vibrate, 'my soul is no longer darkened; the mist hath passed from my spirit.'

'You owe thanks, cousin Allan,' said Lord Menteith, coming forward, 'to Annot Lyle as well as to Heaven for this happy change in your melancholy mood.'

'My noble cousin Menteith,' said Allan, rising and greeting him very respectfully, as well as kindly, 'has known my unhappy circumstances so long that his goodness will require no excuse for my being thus late in bidding him welcome to the castle.'

'We are too old acquaintances, Allan,' said Lord Menteith, 'and too good friends, to stand on the ceremonial of outward greeting; but half the Highlands will be here to-day, and you know with our mountain Chiefs ceremony must not be neglected. What will you give little Annot for making you fit company to meet Evan Dhu and I know not how many bonnets and feathers?'

'What will he give me?' said Annot, smiling; 'nothing less, I hope, than the best ribbon at the Fair of Doune.'

'The Fair of Doune, Annot?' said Allan, sadly. 'There will be bloody work before that day, and I may never see it: but you have well reminded me of what I have long intended to do.'

Having said this, he left the room.

'Should he talk long in this manner,' said Lord Menteith, 'you must keep your harp in tune, my dear Annot.'

'I hope not,' said Annot, anxiously; 'this fit has been a long one, and probably will not soon return. It is fearful to see a mind, naturally generous and affectionate, afflicted by this constitutional malady.'

AS THE STRAIN PROCEEDED, ALLAN M'AULAY GRADUALLY GAVE SIGNS OF RECOVERING.

F painting by W. E. Lockhart, R.S.A.

As she spoke in a low and confidential tone, Lord Menteith naturally drew close and stooped forward that he might the better catch the sense of what she said. When Allan suddenly entered the apartment, they as naturally drew back from each other, with a manner expressive of consciousness, as if surprised in a conversation which they wished to keep secret from him. This did not escape Allan's observation: he stopt short at the door of the apartment, his brows were contracted, his eyes rolled; but it was only the paroxysm of a moment. He passed his broad sinewy hand across his brow, as if to obliterate these signs of emotion, and advanced towards Annot, holding in his hand a very small box made of oak-wood, curiously inlaid. 'I take you to witness,' he said, 'cousin Menteith, that I give this box and its contents to Annot Lyle. It contains a few ornaments that belonged to my poor mother, of trifling value, you may guess, for the wife of a Highland laird has seldom a rich jewel-casket.'

'But these ornaments,' said Annot Lyle, gently and timidly refusing the box, 'belong to the family; I cannot accept ——'

'They belong to me alone, Annot,' said Allan, interrupting her; 'they were my mother's dying bequest. They are all I can call my own, except my plaid and my claymore. Take them, therefore, they are to me valueless trinkets; and keep them for my sake, should I never return from these wars.'

So saying, he opened the case and presented it to Annot. 'If,' said he, 'they are of any value, dispose of them for your own support when this house has been consumed with hostile fire, and can no longer afford you protection. But keep one ring in memory of Allan, who has done, to requite your kindness, if not all he wished, at least all he could.'

Annot Lyle endeavoured in vain to restrain the gathering tears when she said, '*One* ring, Allan, I will accept from you as a memorial of your goodness to a poor orphan, but do not press me to take more; for I cannot, and will not, accept a gift of such disproportioned value.'

'Make your choice, then,' said Allan; 'your delicacy may be well founded; the others will assume a shape in which they may be more useful to you.'

'Think not of it,' said Annot, choosing from the contents of the casket a ring, apparently the most trifling in value which it contained; 'keep them for your own or your brother's bride. But, good Heavens!' she said, interrupting herself, and looking at the ring, 'what is this that I have chosen?'

Allan hastened to look upon it, with eyes of gloomy apprehension: it bore, in enamel, a death's head above two crossed daggers. When Allan recognised the device he uttered a sigh so deep that she dropped the ring from her hand, which rolled upon the floor. Lord Menteith picked it up and returned it to the terrified Annot.

'I take God to witness,' said Allan, in a solemn tone, 'that *your* hand, young lord, and not mine, has again delivered to her this ill-omened gift. It was the mourning ring worn by my mother in memorial of her murdered brother.'

'I fear no omens,' said Annot, smiling through her tears; 'and nothing coming through the hands of my two patrons,' so she was wont to call Lord Menteith and Allan, 'can bring bad luck to the poor orphan.'

She put the ring on her finger, and, turning to her harp, sung to a lively air the following verses of one of the fashionable songs of the period, which had found its way, marked as it was with the quaint hyperbolical taste of King Charles's time, from some court masque to the wilds of Perthshire: —

'Gaze not upon the stars, fond sage,
In them no influence lies;
To read the fate of youth or age,
Look on my Helen's eyes.

'Yet, rash astrologer, refrain!
Too dearly would be won
The prescience of another's pain,
If purchased by thine own.'

'She is right, Allan,' said Lord Menteith; 'and this end of an old song is worth all we shall gain by our attempt to look into futurity.'

'She is WRONG, my lord,' said Allan, sternly, 'though you, who treat with lightness the warnings I have given you, may not live to see the event of the omen. Laugh not so scornfully,' he added, interrupting himself, 'or rather laugh on as loud and as long as you will; your term of laughter will find a pause ere long.'

'I care not for your visions, Allan,' said Lord Menteith: 'however short my span of life, the eye of no Highland seer can see its termination.'

'For Heaven's sake,' said Annot Lyle, interrupting him, 'you know his nature, and how little he can endure ——'

'Fear me not,' said Allan, interrupting her, 'my mind is

now constant and calm. But for you, young lord,' said he, turning to Lord Menteith, 'my eye has sought you through fields of battle, where Highlanders and Lowlanders lay strewed as thick as ever the rooks sat on those ancient trees,' pointing to a rookery which was seen from the window — 'my eye sought you, but your corpse was not there; my eye sought you among a train of unresisting and disarmed captives, drawn up within the bounding walls of an ancient and rugged fortress: flash after flash — platoon after platoon — the hostile shot fell amongst them, they dropped like the dry leaves in autumn, but you were not among their ranks; scaffolds were prepared, blocks were arranged, sawdust was spread, the priest was ready with his book, the headsman with his axe; but there, too, mine eye found you not.'

'The gibbet, then, I suppose, must be my doom?' said Lord Menteith. 'Yet I wish they had spared me the halter, were it but for the dignity of the peerage.'

He spoke this scornfully, yet not without a sort of curiosity, and a wish to receive an answer; for the desire of prying into futurity frequently has some influence even on the minds of those who disavow all belief in the possibility of such predictions.

'Your rank, my lord, will suffer no dishonour in your person or by the manner of your death. Three times have I seen a Highlander plant his dirk in your bosom, and such will be your fate.'

'I wish you would describe him to me,' said Lord Menteith, 'and I shall save him the trouble of fulfilling your prophecy, if his plaid be passable to sword or pistol.'

'Your weapons,' said Allan, 'would avail you little; nor can I give you the information you desire. The face of the vision has been ever averted from me.'

'So be it then,' said Lord Menteith, 'and let it rest in the uncertainty in which your augury has placed it. I shall dine not the less merrily among plaids and dirks and kilts to day.'

'It may be so,' said Allan; 'and it may be you do well to enjoy these moments, which to me are poisoned by auguries of future evil. But I,' he continued — 'I repeat to you, that this weapon — that is, such a weapon as this,' touching the hilt of the dirk which he wore — 'carries your fate.'

'In the meanwhile,' said Lord Menteith, 'you, Allan, have frightened the blood from the cheeks of Annot Lyle; let us

leave this discourse, my friend, and go to see what we both understand — the progress of our military preparations.'

They joined Angus M'Aulay and his English guests, and, in the military discussions which immediately took place, Allan showed a clearness of mind, strength of judgment, and precision of thought totally inconsistent with the mystical light in which his character has been hitherto exhibited.

CHAPTER VII

When Albin her claymore indignantly draws,
When her bonneted chieftains around her shall crowd,
Clan-Ranald the dauntless, and Moray the proud,
All plaided and plumed in their tartan array ——

Lochiel's Warning.

WHOEVER saw that morning the Castle of Darnlinvarach, beheld a busy and a gallant sight.

The various Chiefs, arriving with their different retinues, which, notwithstanding their numbers, formed no more than their usual equipage and body-guard upon occasions of solemnity, saluted the lord of the castle and each other with overflowing kindness or with haughty and distant politeness, according to the circumstances of friendship or hostility in which their clans had recently stood to each other. Each Chief, however small his comparative importance, showed the full disposition to exact from the rest the deference due to a separate and independent prince; while the stronger and more powerful, divided among themselves by recent contentions or ancient feuds, were constrained in policy to use great deference to the feelings of their less powerful brethren, in order, in case of need, to attach as many well-wishers as might be to their own interest and standard. Thus the meeting of Chiefs resembled not a little those ancient Diets of the Empire, where the smallest *Freygraf* who possessed a castle perched upon a barren crag, with a few hundred acres around it, claimed the state and honours of a sovereign prince, and a seat according to his rank among the dignitaries of the Empire.

The followers of the different leaders were separately arranged and accommodated, as room and circumstances best permitted, each retaining, however, his henchman, who waited, close as the shadow, upon his person, to execute whatever might be required by his patron.

The exterior of the castle afforded a singular scene. The

Highlanders, from different islands, glens, and straths, eyed each other at a distance with looks of emulation, inquisitive curiosity, or hostile malevolence; but the most astounding part of the assembly, at least to a Lowland ear, was the rival performance of the bagpipers. These warlike minstrels, who had the highest opinion each of the superiority of his own tribe, joined to the most overweening idea of the importance connected with his profession, at first performed their various pibrochs in front each of his own clan. At length, however, as the blackcocks towards the end of the season, when, in sportsman's language, they are said to flock or crowd, attracted together by the sound of each other's triumphant crow, even so did the pipers, swelling their plaids and tartans in the same triumphant manner in which the birds ruffle up their feathers, begin to approach each other within such distance as might give to their brethren a sample of their skill. Walking within a short interval, and eyeing each other with looks in which self-importance and defiance might be traced, they strutted, puffed, and plied their screaming instruments, each playing his own favourite tune with such a din that, if an Italian musician had lain buried within ten miles of them, he must have risen from the dead to run out of hearing.

The Chieftains meanwhile had assembled in close conclave in the great hall of the castle. Among them were the persons of the greatest consequence in the Highlands, some of them attracted by zeal for the royal cause, and many by aversion to that severe and general domination which the Marquis of Argyle, since his rising to such influence in the state, had exercised over his Highland neighbours. That statesman, indeed, though possessed of considerable abilities and great power, had failings which rendered him unpopular among the Highland chiefs. The devotion which he professed was of a morose and fanatical character; his ambition appeared to be insatiable; and inferior chiefs complained of his want of bounty and liberality. Add to this that, although a Highlander, and of a family distinguished for valour before and since, Gillespie Grumach (which, from an obliquity in his eyes, was the personal distinction he bore in the Highlands, where titles of rank are unknown) was suspected of being a better man in the cabinet than in the field. He and his tribe were particularly obnoxious to the M'Donalds and the M'Leans, two numerous septs, who, though disunited by ancient feuds, agreed in an

intense dislike to the Campbells, or, as they were called, the Children of Diarmid.

For some time the assembled Chiefs remained silent, until some one should open the business of the meeting. At length one of the most powerful of them commenced the diet by saying, 'We have been summoned hither, M'Aulay, to consult of weighty matters concerning the King's affairs and those of the state, and we crave to know by whom they are to be explained to us?'

M'Aulay, whose strength did not lie in oratory, intimated his wish that Lord Menteith should open the business of the council. With great modesty, and at the same time with spirit, that young lord said, 'He wished what he was about to propose had come from some person of better known and more established character. Since, however, it lay with him to be spokesman, he had to state to the Chiefs assembled that those who wished to throw off the base yoke which fanaticism had endeavoured to wreath round their necks had not a moment to lose. The Covenanters,' he said, 'after having twice made war upon their sovereign, and having extorted from him every request, reasonable or unreasonable, which they thought proper to demand; after their Chiefs had been loaded with dignities and favours; after having publicly declared, when his Majesty, after a gracious visit to the land of his nativity, was upon his return to England, that he returned a contented king from a contented people — after all this, and without even the pretext for a national grievance, the same men have, upon doubts and suspicions equally dishonourable to the King and groundless in themselves, detached a strong army to assist his rebels in England in a quarrel with which Scotland had no more to do than she has with the wars in Germany. It was well,' he said, 'that the eagerness with which this treasonable purpose was pursued had blinded the junta who now usurped the government of Scotland to the risk which they were about to incur. The army which they had despatched to England under old Leven comprehended their veteran soldiers, the strength of those armies which had been levied in Scotland during the two former wars ——'

Here Captain Dalgetty endeavoured to rise for the purpose of explaining how many veteran officers, trained in the German wars, were, to his certain knowledge, in the army of the Earl of Leven. But Allan M'Aulay, holding him down in his seat with one hand, pressed the forefinger of the other upon his

own lips, and, though with some difficulty, prevented his interference. Captain Dalgetty looked upon him with a very scornful and indignant air, by which the other's gravity was in no way moved, and Lord Menteith proceeded without farther interruption.

'The moment,' he said, 'was most favourable for all true hearted and loyal Scotchmen to show that the reproach their country had lately undergone arose from the selfish ambition of a few turbulent and seditious men, joined to the absurd fanaticism which, disseminated from five hundred pulpits, had spread like a land-flood over the Lowlands of Scotland. He had letters from the Marquis of Huntly in the north, which he should show to the Chiefs separately. That nobleman, equally loyal and powerful, was determined to exert his utmost energy in the common cause, and the powerful Earl of Seaforth was prepared to join the same standard. From the Earl of Airly and the Ogilvies in Angus shire he had had communications equally decided; and there was no doubt that these, who, with the Hays, Leiths, Burnets, and other loyal gentlemen, would be soon on horseback, would form a body far more than sufficient to overawe the northern Covenanters, who had already experienced their valour in the well-known rout which was popularly termed the "Trot of Turriff." South of Forth and Tay,' he said, 'the King had many friends, who, oppressed by enforced oaths, compulsatory levies, heavy taxes, unjustly imposed and unequally levied by the tyranny of the Committee of Estates and the inquisitorial insolence of the Presbyterian divines, waited but the waving of the royal banner to take up arms. Douglas, Traquair, Roxburgh, Hume, all friendly to the royal cause, would counterbalance,' he said, 'the Covenanting interest in the south; and two gentlemen of name and quality here present, from the north of England, would answer for the zeal of Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Northumberland. Against so many gallant gentlemen the southern Covenanters could but arm raw levies — the Whigamores of the western shires and the ploughmen and mechanics of the Low Country. For the West Highlands, he knew no interest which the Covenanters possessed there except that of one individual, as well known as he was odious. But was there a single man who, on casting his eye round this hall, and recognising the power, the gallantry, and the dignity of the Chiefs assembled, could entertain a moment's doubt of their success against the utmost force which Gillespie

Grumach could collect against them! He had only farther to add that considerable funds, both of money and ammunition, had been provided for the army (here Dalgetty pricked up his ears); that officers of ability and experience in the foreign wars, one of whom was now present (the Captain drew himself up, and looked round), had engaged to train such levies as might require to be disciplined; and that a numerous body of auxiliary forces from Ireland, having been detached from the Earl of Antrim, from Ulster, had successfully accomplished their descent upon the mainland, and, with the assistance of Clan Ranald's people, having taken and fortified the Castle of Mingarry, in spite of Argyle's attempts to intercept them, were in full march to this place of rendezvous. It only remained,' he said, 'that the noble Chiefs assembled, laying aside every lesser consideration, should unite, heart and hand, in the common cause; send the fiery cross through their clans, in order to collect their utmost force; and form their junction with such celerity as to leave the enemy no time either for preparation or recovery from the panic which would spread at the first sound of their pibroch. He himself,' he said, 'though neither among the richest nor the most powerful of the Scottish nobility, felt that he had to support the dignity of an ancient and honourable house, the independence of an ancient and honourable nation, and to that cause he was determined to devote both life and fortune. If those who were more powerful were equally prompt, he trusted they would deserve the thanks of their King and the gratitude of posterity.'

Loud applause followed this speech of Lord Menteith, and testified the general acquiescence of all present in the sentiments which he had expressed; but when the shout had died away, the assembled Chiefs continued to gaze upon each other as if something yet remained to be settled. After some whispers among themselves, an aged man, whom his grey hairs rendered respectable, although he was not of the highest order of Chiefs, replied to what had been said. 'Thane of Menteith,' he said, 'you have well spoken; nor is there one of us in whose bosom the same sentiments do not burn like fire. But it is not strength alone that wins the fight; it is the head of the commander as well as the arm of the soldier that brings victory. I ask of you who is to raise and sustain the banner under which we are invited to rise and muster ourselves? Will it be expected that we should risk our children and the flower of our kinsmen ere we know to whose

guidance they are to be entrusted? This were leading those to slaughter whom, by the laws of God and man, it is our duty to protect. Where is the royal commission under which the lieges are to be convocated in arms? Simple and rude as we may be deemed, we know something of the established rules of war, as well as of the laws of our country; nor will we arm ourselves against the general peace of Scotland unless by the express commands of the King, and under a leader fit to command such men as are here assembled.'

'Where would you find such a leader,' said another Chief, starting up, 'saving the representative of the Lord of the Isles, entitled by birth and hereditary descent to lead forth the array of every clan of the Highlands? and where is that dignity lodged, save in the house of Vich Alister More?'

'I acknowledge,' said another Chief, eagerly interrupting the speaker, 'the truth in what has been first said, but not the inference. If Vich Alister More desires to be held representative of the Lord of the Isles, let him first show his blood is redder than mine.'

'That is soon tried,' said Vich Alister More, laying his hand upon the basket hilt of his claymore. Lord Menteith threw himself between them, entreating and imploring each to remember that the interests of Scotland, the liberty of their country, and the cause of their King ought to be superior in their eyes to any personal disputes respecting descent, rank, and precedence. Several of the Highland Chiefs, who had no desire to admit the claims of either chieftain, interfered to the same purpose, and none with more emphasis than the celebrated Evan Dhu.

'I have come from my lakes,' he said, 'as a stream descends from the hills, not to turn again, but to accomplish my course. It is not by looking back to our own pretensions that we shall serve Scotland or King Charles. My voice shall be for that general whom the King shall name, who will doubtless possess those qualities which are necessary to command men like us. High-born he must be, or we shall lose our rank in obeying him; wise and skilful, or we shall endanger the safety of our people; bravest among the brave, or we shall peril our own honour; temperate, firm, and manly, to keep us united. Such is the man that must command us. Are you prepared, Thane of Menteith, to say where such a general is to be found?'

'There is but ONE,' said Allan M'Aulay; 'and here,' he said,

laying his hand upon the shoulder of Anderson, who stood behind Lord Menteith — 'here he stands!'

The general surprise of the meeting was expressed by an impatient murmur; when Anderson, throwing back the cloak in which his face was muffled, and stepping forward, spoke thus: 'I did not long intend to be a silent spectator of this interesting scene, although my hasty friend has obliged me to disclose myself somewhat sooner than was my intention. Whether I deserve the honour reposed in me by this parchment will best appear from what I shall be able to do for the King's service. It is a commission, under the great seal, to James Graham, Earl of Montrose, to command those forces which are to be assembled for the service of his Majesty in this kingdom.'

A loud shout of approbation burst from the assembly. There was, in fact, no other person to whom, in point of rank, these proud mountaineers would have been disposed to submit. His inveterate and hereditary hostility to the Marquis of Argyle ensured his engaging in the war with sufficient energy, while his well-known military talents and his tried valour afforded every hope of his bringing it to a favourable conclusion.

CHAPTER VIII

Our plot is a good plot as ever was laid ; our friends true and constant — a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation — an excellent plot, very good friends. *Henry IV.* Part I.

NO sooner had the general acclamation of joyful surprise subsided than silence was eagerly demanded for reading the royal commission ; and the bonnets, which hitherto each Chief had worn, probably because unwilling to be the first to uncover, were now at once vailed in honour of the royal warrant. It was couched in the most full and ample terms, authorising the Earl of Montrose to assemble the subjects in arms, for the putting down the present rebellion, which divers traitors and seditious persons had levied against the King, to the manifest forfaulture, as it stated, of their allegiance, and to the breach of the pacification between the two kingdoms. It enjoined all subordinate authorities to be obedient and assisting to Montrose in his enterprise ; gave him the power of making ordinances and proclamations, punishing misdemeanours, pardoning criminals, placing and displacing governors and commanders. In fine, it was as large and full a commission as any with which a prince could entrust a subject. As soon as it was finished a shout burst from the assembled Chiefs, in testimony of their ready submission to the will of their sovereign. Not contented with generally thanking them for a reception so favourable, Montrose hastened to address himself to individuals. The most important Chiefs had already been long personally known to him, but even to those of inferior consequence he now introduced himself, and by the acquaintance he displayed with their peculiar designations and the circumstances and history of their clans, he showed how long he must have studied the character of the mountaineers, and prepared himself for such a situation as he now held.

While he was engaged in these acts of courtesy his graceful

manner, expressive features, and dignity of deportment made a singular contrast with the coarseness and meanness of his dress. Montrose possessed that sort of form and face in which the beholder, at the first glance, sees nothing extraordinary, but of which the interest becomes more impressive the longer we gaze upon them. His stature was very little above the middle size, but in person he was uncommonly well-built, and capable both of exerting great force and enduring much fatigue. In fact, he enjoyed a constitution of iron, without which he could not have sustained the trials of his extraordinary campaigns, through all of which he subjected himself to the hardships of the meanest soldier. He was perfect in all exercises, whether peaceful or martial, and possessed, of course, that graceful ease of deportment proper to those to whom habit has rendered all postures easy.

His long brown hair, according to the custom of men of quality among the Royalists, was parted on the top of his head, and trained to hang down on each side in curled locks, one of which, descending two or three inches lower than the others, intimated Montrose's compliance with that fashion against which it pleased Mr. Prynne, the Puritan, to write a treatise entitled *The Unloveliness of Love-locks*. The features which these tresses inclosed were of that kind which derive their interest from the character of the man rather than from the regularity of their form. But a high nose, a full, decided, well-opened, quick grey eye, and a sanguine complexion, made amends for some coarseness and irregularity in the subordinate parts of the face; so that, altogether, Montrose might be termed rather a handsome than a hard-featured man. But those who saw him when his soul looked through those eyes with all the energy and fire of genius, those who heard him speak with the authority of talent and the eloquence of nature, were impressed with an opinion even of his external form more enthusiastically favourable than the portraits which still survive would entitle us to ascribe to it. Such, at least, was the impression he made upon the assembled Chiefs of the mountaineers, over whom, as upon all persons in their state of society, personal appearance has no small influence.

In the discussions which followed his discovering himself, Montrose explained the various risks which he had run in his present undertaking. His first attempt had been to assemble a body of loyalists in the north of England, who, in obedience to the orders of the Marquis of Newcastle, he expected would

have marched into Scotland; but the disinclination of the English to cross the Border, and the delay of the Earl of Antrim, who was to have landed in the Solway Firth with his Irish army, prevented his executing this design. Other plans having in like manner failed, he stated that he found himself under the necessity of assuming a disguise to render his passage secure through the Lowlands, in which he had been kindly assisted by his kinsman of Menteith. By what means Allan M'Aulay had come to know him he could not pretend to explain. Those who knew Allan's prophetic pretensions smiled mysteriously; but he himself only replied, that 'the Earl of Montrose need not be surprised if he was known to thousands of whom he himself could retain no memory.'

'By the honour of a cavalier,' said Captain Dalgetty, finding at length an opportunity to thrust in his word, 'I am proud and happy in having an opportunity of drawing a sword under your lordship's command; and I do forgive all grudge, malcontent, and malice of my heart to Mr. Allan M'Aulay for having thrust me down to the lowest seat of the board yestreen. Certes, he hath this day spoken so like a man having full command of his senses that I had resolved in my secret purpose that he was no way entitled to claim the privilege of insanity. But since I was only postponed to a noble earl, my future commander-in-chief, I do, before you all, recognise the justice of the preference, and heartily salute Allan as one who is to be his *bon camarado*.'

Having made this speech, which was little understood or attended to, without putting off his military glove, he seized on Allan's hand and began to shake it with violence, which Allan, with a gripe like a smith's vice, returned with such force as to drive the iron splents of the gauntlet into the hand of the wearer.

Captain Dalgetty might have construed this into a new affront had not his attention, as he stood blowing and shaking the injured member, been suddenly called by Montrose himself.

'Hear this news,' he said, 'Captain Dalgetty — I should say Major Dalgetty — the Irish, who are to profit by your military experience, are now within a few leagues of us.'

'Our deer-stalkers,' said Angus M'Aulay, 'who were abroad to bring in venison for this honourable party, have heard of a band of strangers, speaking neither Saxon nor pure Gaelic, and with difficulty making themselves understood by the people of the country, who are marching this way in arms, under the

leading, it is said, of Alaster M'Donnell, who is commonly called Young Colkitto.'

'These must be our men,' said Montrose; 'we must hasten to send messengers forward, both to act as guides and to relieve their wants.'

'The last,' said Angus M'Aulay, 'will be no easy matter; for I am informed that, excepting muskets and a very little ammunition, they want everything that soldiers should have; and they are particularly deficient in money, in shoes, and in raiment.'

'There is at least no use in saying so,' said Montrose, 'in so loud a tone. The Puritan weavers of Glasgow shall provide them plenty of broadcloth when we make a descent from the Highlands; and if the ministers could formerly preach the old women of the Scottish boroughs out of their webs of napery to make tents to the fellows on Dunse Law,[1] I will try whether I have not a little interest both to make these godly dames renew their patriotic gift and the prick-eared knaves, their husbands, open their purses.'

'And respecting arms,' said Captain Dalgetty, 'if your lordship will permit an old cavalier to speak his mind, so that the one-third have muskets, my darling weapon would be the pike for the remainder, whether for resisting a charge of horse or for breaking the infantry. A common smith will make a hundred pike-heads in a day; here is plenty of wood for shafts; and I will uphold that, according to the best usages of war, a strong battalion of pikes, drawn up in the fashion of the Lion of the North, the immortal Gustavus, would beat the Macedonian phalanx, of which I used to read in the Marischal College, when I studied in the ancient town of Bon Accord; and further, I will venture to predicate——'

The Captain's lecture upon tactics was here suddenly interrupted by Allan M'Aulay, who said hastily——'Room for an unexpected and unwelcome guest!'

At the same moment the door of the hall opened, and a grey-haired man, of a very stately appearance, presented himself to the assembly. There was much dignity, and even authority, in his manner. His stature was above the common size, and his looks such as were used to command. He cast a severe, and almost stern, glance upon the assembly of Chiefs. Those of the higher rank among them returned it with scornful indifference; but some of the western gentle-

[1] The Covenanters encamped on Dunse Law during the troubles of 1639.

men of inferior power looked as if they wished themselves elsewhere.

'To which of this assembly,' said the stranger, 'am I to address myself as leader? or have you not fixed upon the person who is to hold an office at least as perilous as it is honourable?'

'Address yourself to me, Sir Duncan Campbell,' said Montrose, stepping forward.

'To you!' said Sir Duncan Campbell, with some scorn.

'Yes, to me,' repeated Montrose — 'to the Earl of Montrose, if you have forgot him.'

'I should now, at least,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'have had some difficulty in recognising him in the disguise of a groom. And yet I might have guessed that no evil influence inferior to your lordship's, distinguished as one who troubles Israel, could have collected together this rash assembly of misguided persons.'

'I will answer unto you,' said Montrose, 'in the manner of your own Puritans. I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house. But let us leave an altercation which is of little consequence but to ourselves, and hear the tidings you have brought from your Chief of Argyle; for I must conclude that it is in his name that you have come to this meeting.'

'It is in the name of the Marquis of Argyle,' said Sir Duncan Campbell — 'in the name of the Scottish Convention of Estates, that I demand to know the meaning of this singular convocation. If it is designed to disturb the peace of the country, it were but acting like neighbours and men of honour to give us some intimation to stand upon our guard.'

'It is a singular and new state of affairs in Scotland,' said Montrose, turning from Sir Duncan Campbell to the assembly, 'when Scottish men of rank and family cannot meet in the house of a common friend without an inquisitorial visit and demand, on the part of our rulers, to know the subject of our conference. Methinks our ancestors were accustomed to hold Highland huntings or other purposes of meeting without asking the leave either of the great M'Callum More himself or any of his emissaries or dependants.'

'The times have been such in Scotland,' answered one of the Western Chiefs, 'and such they will again be, when the intruders on our ancient possessions are again reduced to be Lairds of Lochow, instead of overspreading us like a band of devouring locusts.'

'Am I to understand, then,' said Sir Duncan, 'that it is

against *my* name alone that these preparations are directed? or are the race of Diarmid only to be sufferers in common with the whole of the peaceful and orderly inhabitants of Scotland?'

'I would ask,' said a wild-looking Chief, starting hastily up, 'one question of the Knight of Ardenvohr ere he proceeds farther in his daring catechism. Has he brought more than one life to this castle, that he ventures to intrude among us for the purposes of insult?'

'Gentlemen,' said Montrose, 'let me implore your patience; a messenger who comes among us for the purpose of embassy is entitled to freedom of speech and a safe-conduct. And since Sir Duncan Campbell is so pressing, I care not if I inform him, for his guidance, that he is in an assembly of the King's loyal subjects, convoked by me, in his Majesty's name and authority, and as empowered by his Majesty's royal commission.'

'We are to have, then, I presume,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'a civil war in all its forms? I have been too long a soldier to view its approach with anxiety; but it would have been for my Lord of Montrose's honour if in this matter he had consulted his own ambition less and the peace of the country more.'

'Those consulted their own ambition and self-interest, Sir Duncan,' answered Montrose, 'who brought the country to the pass in which it now stands, and rendered necessary the sharp remedies which we are now reluctantly about to use.'

'And what rank among these self-seekers,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'shall we assign to a noble Earl so violently attached to the Covenant that he was the first, in 1639, to cross the Tyne, wading middle deep at the head of his regiment, to charge the royal forces? It was the same, I think, who imposed the Covenant upon the burgesses and colleges of Aberdeen at the point of sword and pike.'

'I understand your sneer, Sir Duncan,' said Montrose, temperately; 'and I can only add that, if sincere repentance can make amends for youthful error, and for yielding to the artful representation of ambitious hypocrites, I shall be pardoned for the crimes with which you taunt me. I will at least endeavour to deserve forgiveness, for I am here, with my sword in my hand, willing to spend the best blood of my body to make amends for my error; and mortal man can do no more.'

'Well, my lord,' said Sir Duncan, 'I shall be sorry to carry back this language to the Marquis of Argyle. I had it in farther charge from the Marquis that to prevent the bloody feuds which must necessarily follow a Highland war, his lordship will

be contented if terms of truce could be arranged to the north of the Highland line, as there is ground enough in Scotland to fight upon, without neighbours destroying each other's families and inheritances.'

'It is a peaceful proposal,' said Montrose, smiling, 'such as it should be, coming from one whose personal actions have always been more peaceful than his measures. Yet, if the terms of such a truce could be equally fixed, and if we can obtain security — for that, Sir Duncan, is indispensable — that your Marquis will observe these terms with strict fidelity, I, for my part, should be content to leave peace behind us, since we must needs carry war before us. But, Sir Duncan, you are too old and experienced a soldier for us to permit you to remain in our leaguer and witness our proceedings; we shall therefore, when you have refreshed yourself, recommend your speedy return to Inverary, and we shall send with you a gentleman on our part to adjust the terms of the Highland armistice, in case the Marquis shall be found serious in proposing such a measure.'

Sir Duncan Campbell assented by a bow.

'My Lord of Menteith,' continued Montrose, 'will you have the goodness to attend Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, while we determine who shall return with him to his Chief? M'Aulay will permit us to request that he be entertained with suitable hospitality.'

'I will give orders for that,' said Allan M'Aulay, rising and coming forward. 'I love Sir Duncan Campbell; we have been joint sufferers in former days, and I do not forget it now.'

'My Lord of Menteith,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'I am grieved to see you, at your early age, engaged in such desperate and rebellious courses.'

'I am young,' answered Menteith, 'yet old enough to distinguish between right and wrong, between loyalty and rebellion; and the sooner a good course is begun, the longer and the better have I a chance of running it.'

'And you too, my friend, Allan M'Aulay,' said Sir Duncan, taking his hand, 'must we also call each other enemies, that have been so often allied against a common foe?' Then turning round to the meeting, he said, 'Farewell, gentlemen; there are so many of you to whom I wish well that your rejection of all terms of mediation gives me deep affliction. May Heaven, he said, looking upwards, 'judge between our motives and those of the movers of this civil commotion!'

'Amen,' said Montrose; 'to that tribunal we all submit us.'

Sir Duncan Campbell left the hall, accompanied by Allan M'Aulay and Lord Menteith. 'There goes a true bred Campbell,' said Montrose, as the envoy departed, 'for they are ever fair and false.'

'Pardon me, my lord,' said Evan Dhu; 'hereditary enemy as I am to their name, I have ever found the Knight of Ardenvohr brave in war, honest in peace, and true in council.'

'Of his own disposition,' said Montrose, 'such he is undoubtedly; but he now acts as the organ or mouthpiece of his Chief, the Marquis, the falsest man that ever drew breath. And, M'Aulay,' he continued in a whisper to his host, 'lest he should make some impression upon the inexperience of Menteith or the singular disposition of your brother, you had better send music into their chamber, to prevent his inveigling them into any private conference.'

'The devil a musician have I,' answered M'Aulay, 'excepting the piper, who has nearly broke his wind by an ambitious contention for superiority with three of his own craft; but I can send Annot Lyle and her harp.' And he left the apartment to give orders accordingly.

Meanwhile a warm discussion took place who should undertake the perilous task of returning with Sir Duncan to Inverary. To the higher dignitaries, accustomed to consider themselves upon an equality even with M'Callum More, this was an office not to be proposed; unto others who could not plead the same excuse it was altogether unacceptable. One would have thought Inverary had been the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the inferior Chiefs showed such reluctance to approach it. After a considerable hesitation, the plain reason was at length spoken out, namely, that whatever Highlander should undertake an office so distasteful to M'Callum More, he would be sure to treasure the offence in his remembrance, and one day or other to make him bitterly repent of it.

In this dilemma, Montrose, who considered the proposed armistice as a mere stratagem on the part of Argyle, although he had not ventured bluntly to reject it in presence of those whom it concerned so nearly, resolved to impose the danger and dignity upon Captain Dalgetty, who had neither clan nor estate in the Highlands upon which the wrath of Argyle could wreak itself.

'But I have a neck though,' said Dalgetty, bluntly; 'and what if he chooses to avenge himself upon that? I have known a case where an honourable ambassador has been hanged as a

spy before now. Neither did the Romans use ambassadors much more mercifully at the siege of Capua, although I read that they only cut off their hands and noses, put out their eyes, and suffered them to depart in peace.'

'By my honour, Captain Dalgetty,' said Montrose, 'should the Marquis, contrary to the rules of war, dare to practise any atrocity against you, you may depend upon my taking such signal vengeance that all Scotland shall ring of it.'

'That will do but little for Dalgetty,' returned the Captain; 'but *corragio!* as the Spaniard says. With the Land of Promise full in view, the moor of Drumthwacket, *mea paupera regna*, as we said at Marischal College, I will not refuse your Excellency's commission, being conscious it becomes a cavalier of honour to obey his commander's orders, in defiance both of gibbet and sword.'

'Gallantly resolved,' said Montrose; 'and if you will come apart with me, I will furnish you with the conditions to be laid before M'Callum More, upon which we are willing to grant him a truce for his Highland dominions.'

With these we need not trouble our readers. They were of an evasive nature, calculated to meet a proposal which Montrose considered to have been made only for the purpose of gaining time. When he had put Captain Dalgetty in complete possession of his instructions, and when that worthy, making his military obeisance, was near the door of his apartment, Montrose made him a sign to return.

'I presume,' said he, 'I need not remind an officer who has served under the great Gustavus that a little more is required of a person sent with a flag of truce than mere discharge of his instructions, and that his general will expect from him, on his return, some account of the state of the enemy's affairs, as far as they come under his observation. In short, Captain Dalgetty, you must be *un peu clairvoyant*.'

'Ah ha! your Excellency,' said the Captain, twisting his hard features into an inimitable expression of cunning and intelligence, 'if they do not put my head in a poke, which I have known practised upon honourable soldados who have been suspected to come upon such errands as the present, your Excellency may rely on a preceese narration of whatever Dugald Dalgetty shall hear or see, were it even how many turns of tune there are in M'Callum More's pibroch, or how many checks in the sett of his plaid and trews.'

'Enough,' answered Montrose; 'farewell, Captain Dalgetty;

and, as they say that a lady's mind is always expressed in her postscript, so I would have you think that the most important part of your commission lies in what I have last said to you.'

Dalgetty once more grimmed intelligence, and withdrew to victual his charger and himself for the fatigues of his approaching mission.

At the door of the stable — for Gustavus always claimed his first care — he met Angus M'Aulay and Sir Miles Musgrave, who had been looking at his horse; and, after praising his points and carriage, both united in strongly dissuading the Captain from taking an animal of such value with him upon his present very fatiguing journey.

Angus painted in the most alarming colours the roads, or rather wild tracks, by which it would be necessary for him to travel into Argyleshire, and the wretched huts or bothies where he would be condemned to pass the night, and where no forage could be procured for his horse, unless he could eat the stumps of old heather. In short, he pronounced it absolutely impossible that, after undertaking such a pilgrimage, the animal could be in any case for military service. The Englishman strongly confirmed all that Angus had said, and gave himself, body and soul, to the devil if he thought it was not an act little short of absolute murder to carry a horse worth a farthing into such a waste and inhospitable desert. Captain Dalgetty for an instant looked steadily first at one of the gentlemen and next at the other, and then asked them, as if in a state of indecision, what they would advise him to do with Gustavus under such circumstances.

'By the hand of my father, my dear friend,' answered M'Aulay, 'if you leave the beast in my keeping, you may rely on his being fed and sorted according to his worth and quality, and that, upon your happy return, you will find him as sleek as an onion boiled in butter.'

'Or,' said Sir Miles Musgrave, 'if this worthy cavalier chooses to part with his charger for a reasonable sum, I have some part of the silver candlesticks still dancing the hays in my purse, which I shall be very willing to transfer to his.'

'In brief, mine honourable friends,' said Captain Dalgetty, again eyeing them both with an air of comic penetration, 'I find it would not be altogether unacceptable to either of you to have some token to remember the old soldier by in case it shall please M'Callum More to hang him up at the gate of his own castle. And doubtless it would be no small satisfaction to me.

in such an event, that a noble and loyal cavalier like Sir Miles Musgrave, or a worthy and hospitable Chieftain like our excellent landlord, should act as my executor.'

Both hastened to protest that they had no such object, and insisted again upon the impassable character of the Highland paths. Angus M'Aulay mumbled over a number of hard Gaelic names descriptive of the difficult passes, precipices, corries, and [illegible] ugh which he said the road lay to Inveraray, when old [illegible]ld, who had now entered, sanctioned his master's account of [illegible] difficulties by holding up his hands, and elevating his [illegible] and shaking his head at every guttural which M'Aulay pronounced. But all this did not move the inflexible Captain.

'My worthy friends,' said he, 'Gustavus is not new to the dangers of travelling and the mountains of Bohemia; and — no disparagement to the heals and corries Mr. Angus is pleased to mention, and of which Sir Miles, who never saw them, confirms the [illegible] these mountains may compete with the vilest roads in Europe. In fact, my horse hath a most excellent and social quality; for, although he cannot pledge in my cup, yet we share our loaf between us, and it will be hard if he suffers famine where cakes or bannocks are to be found. And, to cut this matter short, I beseech you, my good friends, to observe the state of Sir Duncan Campbell's palfrey, which stands in that stall before us, fat and fair; and, in return for your anxiety on my account, I give you my honest asseveration that, while we travel the same road, both that palfrey and his rider shall look for food before either Gustavus or I.'

Having said this, he filled a large measure with corn and walked up with it to his charger, who, by his low whinnying neigh, his pricked ears, and his pawing, showed how close the alliance was betwixt him and his rider. Nor did he taste his corn until he had returned his master's caresses by licking his hands and face. After this interchange of greeting, the steed began to his provender with an eager despatch which showed old military habits; and the master, after looking on the animal with great complacency for about five minutes, said, 'Much good may it do your honest heart, Gustavus; now must I go and lay in provant myself for the campaign.'

He then departed, having first saluted the Englishman and Angus M'Aulay, who remained looking at each other for some time in silence, and then burst out into a fit of laughter.

'That fellow,' said Sir Miles Musgrave, 'is formed to go through the world.'

'I shall think so too,' said M'Aulay, 'if he can slip through M'Callum More's fingers as easily as he has done through ours.'

'Do you think,' said the Englishman, 'that the Marquis will not respect in Captain Dalgetty's person the laws of civilised war?'

'No more than I would respect a Lowland proclamation,' said Angus M'Aulay. 'But come along, it is time I were returning to my guests'

CHAPTER IX

In a rebellion,
When what 's not meet, but what must be, was law
Th[illegible] are they chosen ; in a better hour,
Let what is meet be said it must be meet,
And throw their power i' the dust.

Coriolanus.

IN a small apartment, remote from the rest of the guests assembled at the castle, Sir Duncan Campbell was presented with every species of refreshment and respectfully attended by Lord Menteith and by Allan M'Aulay. His discourse with the latter turned upon a sort of hunting campaign, in which they had been engaged together against the Children of the Mist, with whom the Knight of Ardenvohr, as well as the M'Aulays, had a deadly and irreconcilable feud. Sir Duncan, however, speedily endeavoured to lead back the conversation to the subject of his present errand to the Castle of Darnlinvarach.

'It grieved him to the very heart,' he said, 'to see that friends and neighbours, who should stand shoulder to shoulder, were likely to be engaged hand to hand in a cause which so little concerned them. What signifies it,' he said, 'to the Highland Chiefs whether King or Parliament got uppermost? Were it not better to let them settle their own differences without interference, while the Chiefs, in the meantime, took the opportunity of establishing their own authority in a manner not to be called in question hereafter by either King or Parliament?' He reminded Allan M'Aulay that the measures taken in the last reign to settle the peace, as was alleged, of the Highlands, were in fact levelled at the patriarchal power of the Chieftains; and he mentioned the celebrated settlement of the Fife Undertakers, as they were called, in the Lewis, as part of a deliberate plan, formed to introduce strangers among the Celtic tribes, to destroy by degrees their

ancient customs and mode of government, and to despoil them of the inheritance of their fathers.[1] 'And yet,' he continued, addressing Allan, 'it is for the purpose of giving despotic authority to the monarch by whom these designs have been nursed that so many Highland Chiefs are upon the point of quarrelling with, and drawing the sword against, their neighbours, allies, and ancient confederates.'

'It is to my brother,' said Allan — 'it is to the eldest son of my father's house, that the Knight of Ardenvohr must address these remonstrances. I am, indeed, the brother of Angus; but in being so I am only the first of his clansmen, and bound to show an example to the others by my cheerful and ready obedience to his commands.'

'The cause also,' said Lord Menteith, interposing, 'is far more general than Sir Duncan Campbell seems to suppose it. It is neither limited to Saxon nor to Gael, to mountain nor to strath, to Highlands nor to Lowlands. The question is, if we will continue to be governed by the unlimited authority assumed by a set of persons in no respect superior to ourselves, instead of returning to the natural government of the prince against whom they have rebelled. And respecting the interest of the Highlands in particular,' he added, 'I crave Sir Duncan Campbell's pardon for my plainness; but it seems very clear to me that the only effect produced by the present usurpation will be the aggrandisement of one overgrown clan at the expense of every independent chief in the Highlands.'

'I will not reply to you, my lord,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'because I know your prejudices, and from whom they are borrowed; yet you will pardon my saying that, being at the head of a rival branch of the house of Graham, I have both read of and known an Earl of Menteith who would have disdained to have been tutored in politics or to have been commanded in war by an Earl of Montrose.'

'You will find it in vain, Sir Duncan,' said Lord Menteith, haughtily, 'to set my vanity in arms against my principles. The King gave my ancestors their title and rank; and these shall never prevent my acting, in the royal cause, under any one who is better qualified than myself to be a commander-in-chief. Least of all shall any miserable jealousy prevent me from placing my hand and sword under the guidance of the bravest, the most loyal, the most heroic spirit among our Scottish nobility.'

[1] See Colonisation of Lewis. Note 2.

'Pity,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'that you cannot add to his panegyric the farther epithets of the most steady and the most consistent. But I have no purpose of debating these points with you, my lord,' waving his hand, as if to avoid farther discussion; 'the die is cast with you; allow me only to express my sorrow for the disastrous fate to which Angus M'Aulay's natural rashness and your lordship's influence are dragging my gallant friend Allan here, with his father's clan and many a brave man besides.'

'The die is cast for us all, Sir Duncan, replied Allan, looking gloomy, and arguing on his own hypochondriac feelings; 'the iron hand of destiny branded our fate upon our forehead long ere we could form a wish or raise a finger in our own behalf. Were this otherwise, by what means does the seer ascertain the future from those shadowy presages which haunt his waking and his sleeping eye? Nought can be foreseen but that which is certain to happen.'

Sir Duncan Campbell was about to reply, and the darkest and most contested point of metaphysics might have been brought into discussion betwixt two Highland disputants, when the door opened and Annot Lyle, with her clairshach in her hand, entered the apartment. The freedom of a Highland maiden was in her step and in her eye; for, bred up in the closest intimacy with the Laird of M'Aulay and his brother, with Lord Menteith and other young men who frequented Darnlinvarach, she possessed none of that timidity which a female educated chiefly among her own sex would either have felt or thought necessary to assume on an occasion like the present.

Her dress partook of the antique, for new fashions seldom penetrated into the Highlands, nor would they easily have found their way to a castle inhabited chiefly by men whose sole occupation was war and the chase. Yet Annot's garments were not only becoming but even rich. Her open jacket, with a high collar, was composed of blue cloth, richly embroidered, and had silver clasps to fasten when it pleased the wearer. Its sleeves, which were wide, came no lower than the elbow, and terminated in a golden fringe; under this upper coat, if it can be so termed, she wore an under dress of blue satin, also richly embroidered, but which was several shades lighter in colour than the upper garment. The petticoat was formed of tartan silk, in the sett or pattern of which the colour of blue greatly predominated, so as to

remove the tawdry effect too frequently produced in tartan by the mixture and strong opposition of colours. An antique silver chain hung round her neck and supported the 'wrest' or key with which she tuned her instrument. A small ruff rose above her collar and was secured by a brooch of some value, an old keepsake from Lord Menteith. Her profusion of light hair almost hid her laughing eyes, while, with a smile and a blush, she mentioned that she had M'Aulay's directions to ask them if they chose music. Sir Duncan Campbell gazed with considerable surprise and interest at the lovely apparition which thus interrupted his debate with Allan M'Aulay.

'Can this,' he said to him in a whisper, 'a creature so beautiful and so elegant, be a domestic musician of your brother's establishment?'

'By no means,' answered Allan, hastily, yet with some hesitation; 'she is a — a — near relation of our family, and treated,' he added, more firmly, 'as an adopted daughter of our father's house.'

As he spoke thus, he arose from his seat, and, with that air of courtesy which every Highlander can assume when it suits him to practise it, he resigned it to Annot, and offered to her at the same time whatever refreshments the table afforded, with an assiduity which was probably designed to give Sir Duncan an impression of her rank and consequence. If such was Allan's purpose, however, it was unnecessary. Sir Duncan kept his eyes fixed upon Annot with an expression of much deeper interest than could have arisen from any impression that she was a person of consequence. Annot even felt embarrassed under the old knight's steady gaze; and it was not without considerable hesitation that, tuning her instrument, and receiving an assenting look from Lord Menteith and Allan, she executed the following ballad, which our friend, Mr. Secundus Macpherson, whose goodness we had before to acknowledge, has thus translated into the English tongue:[1]

THE ORPHAN MAID

November's hail-cloud drifts away,
November's sunbeam wan
Looks coldly on the castle grey,
When forth comes Lady Anne.

[1] See Literal Prose Translation. Note 3.

The orphan by the oak was set,
Her arms, her feet, were bare;
The hail-drops had not melted yet,
Amid her raven hair.

'And, Dame,' she said, 'by all the ties
That child and mother know,
Aid one who never knew these joys,
Relieve an orphan's woe.'

The lady said, 'An orphan's state
Is hard and sad to bear;
Yet worse the widow'd mother's fate,
Who mourns both lord and heir.

'Twelve times the rolling year has sped,
Since, when from vengeance wild
Of fierce Strathallan's Chief I fled;
Forth's eddies whelm'd my child.'

'Twelve times the year its course has born,'
The wandering maid replied,
'Since fishers on St. Bridget's morn
Drew nets on Campsie side.

'St. Bridget sent no scaly spoil:
An infant, wellnigh dead,
They saved, and rear'd in want and toil,
To beg from you her bread.'

That orphan maid the lady kiss'd —
'My husband's looks you bear;
St. Bridget and her morn be bless'd!
You are his widow's heir.'

They 've robed that maid, so poor and pale,
In silks and sandals rare;
And pearls, for drops of frozen hail,
Are glistening in her hair.

While the song proceeded, Lord Menteith observed with some surprise that it appeared to produce a much deeper effect upon the mind of Sir Duncan Campbell than he could possibly have anticipated from his age and character. He well knew that the Highlanders of that period possessed a much greater sensibility both for tale and song than was found among their Lowland neighbours; but even this, he thought, hardly accounted for the embarrassment with which the old man withdrew his eyes from the songstress, as if unwilling to suffer them to rest on an object so interesting. Still less was it to be expected that features which expressed pride, stern

common sense, and the austere habit of authority should have been so much agitated by so trivial a circumstance. As the Chief's brow became clouded, he drooped his large shaggy grey eyebrows until they almost concealed his eyes, on the lids of which something like a tear might be seen to glisten. He remained silent and fixed in the same posture for a minute or two after the last note had ceased to vibrate. He then raised his head, and, having looked at Annot Lyle, as if purposing to speak to her, he as suddenly changed that purpose, and was about to address Allan, when the door opened and the lord of the castle made his appearance.

CHAPTER X

Dark on their journey lour'd the gloomy day,
Wild were the hills, and doubtful grew the way;
More dark, more gloomy, and more doubtful show'd
The mansion which received them from the road.

The Travellers, a Romance.

ANGUS M'AULAY was charged with a message which he seemed to find some difficulty in communicating; for it was not till after he had framed his speech several different ways, and blundered them all, that he succeeded in letting Sir Duncan Campbell know that the cavalier who was to accompany him was waiting in readiness, and that all was prepared for his return to Inverary. Sir Duncan Campbell rose up very indignantly; the affront which this message implied immediately driving out of his recollection the sensibility which had been awakened by the music.

'I little expected this,' he said, looking indignantly at Angus M'Aulay. 'I little thought that there was a Chief in the West Highlands who, at the pleasure of a Saxon, would have bid the Knight of Ardenvohr leave his castle when the sun was declining from the meridian, and ere the second cup had been filled. But farewell, sir, the food of a churl does not satisfy the appetite; when I next revisit Darnlinvarach it shall be with a naked sword in one hand and a firebrand in the other.'

'And if you so come,' said Angus, 'I pledge myself to meet you fairly, though you brought five hundred Campbells at your back, and to afford you and them such entertainment that you shall not again complain of the hospitality of Darnlinvarach.'

'Threatened men,' said Sir Duncan, 'live long. Your turn for gasconading, Laird of M'Aulay, is too well known that men of honour should regard your vaunts. To you, my lord, and to Allan, who have supplied the place of my churlish host, I leave my thanks. And to you, pretty mistress,' he said, addressing Annot Lyle, 'this little token, for having opened a fountain

which hath been dry for many a year.' So saying, he left the apartment, and commanded his attendants to be summoned. Angus M'Aulay, equally embarrassed and incensed at the charge of inhospitality, which was the greatest possible affront to a Highlander, did not follow Sir Duncan to the courtyard, where, mounting his palfrey, which was in readiness, followed by six mounted attendants, and accompanied by the noble Captain Dalgetty, who had also awaited him, holding Gustavus ready for action, though he did not draw his girths and mount till Sir Duncan appeared, the whole cavalcade left the castle.

The journey was long and toilsome, but without any of the extreme privations which the Laird of M'Aulay had prophesied. In truth, Sir Duncan was very cautious to avoid those nearer and more secret paths by means of which the county of Argyle was accessible from the eastward; for his relation and chief, the Marquis, was used to boast that he would not for a hundred thousand crowns any mortal should know the passes by which an armed force could penetrate into his country.

Sir Duncan Campbell, therefore, rather shunned the Highlands, and, falling into the Low Country, made for the nearest seaport in the vicinity, where he had several half-decked galleys, or birlings, as they were called, at his command. In one of these they embarked, with Gustavus in company, who was so seasoned to adventure that land and sea seemed as indifferent to him as to his master.

The wind being favourable, they pursued their way rapidly with sails and oars; and early the next morning it was announced to Captain Dalgetty, then in a small cabin beneath the half-deck, that the galley was under the walls of Sir Duncan Campbell's castle.

Ardenvohr, accordingly, rose high above him when he came upon the deck of the galley. It was a gloomy square tower, of considerable size and great height, situated upon a headland projecting into the salt-water lake, or arm of the sea, which they had entered on the preceding evening. A wall, with flanking towers at each angle, surrounded the castle to landward; but towards the lake it was built so near the brink of the precipice as only to leave room for a battery of seven guns, designed to protect the fortress from any insult from that side, although situated too high to be of any effectual use according to the modern system of warfare.

The eastern sun, rising behind the old tower, flung its shadow far on the lake, darkening the deck of the galley, on

which Captain Dalgetty now walked, waiting with some impatience the signal to land. Sir Duncan Campbell, as he was informed by his attendants, was already within the walls of the castle; but no one encouraged the Captain's proposal of following him ashore, until, as they stated, they should receive the direct permission or order of the Knight of Ardenvohr.

In a short time afterwards the mandate arrived, while a boat, with a piper in the bow, bearing the Knight of Ardenvohr's crest in silver upon his left arm, and playing with all his might the family march, entitled 'The Campbells are Coming,' approached to conduct the envoy of Montrose to the castle of Ardenvohr. The distance between the galley and the beach was so short as scarce to require the assistance of the eight sturdy rowers, in bonnets, short coats, and trews, whose efforts sent the boat to the little creek in which they usually landed before one could have conceived that it had left the side of the birling. Two of the boatmen, in spite of Dalgetty's resistance, hoisted the Captain on the back of a third Highlander, and, wading through the surf with him, landed him high and dry upon the beach beneath the castle rock. In the face of this rock there appeared something like the entrance of a low-browed cavern, towards which the assistants were preparing to hurry our friend Dalgetty, when, shaking himself loose from them with some difficulty, he insisted upon seeing Gustavus safely landed before he proceeded one step farther. The Highlanders could not comprehend what he meant, until one who had picked up a little English, or rather Lowland Scotch, exclaimed, 'Houts! it 's a' about her horse, ta useless baste.' Farther remonstrance on the part of Captain Dalgetty was interrupted by the appearance of Sir Duncan Campbell himself, from the mouth of the cavern which we have described, for the purpose of inviting Captain Dalgetty to accept of the hospitality of Ardenvohr, pledging his honour, at the same time, that Gustavus should be treated as became the hero from whom he derived his name, not to mention the important person to whom he now belonged. Notwithstanding this satisfactory guarantee, Captain Dalgetty would still have hesitated, such was his anxiety to witness the fate of his companion Gustavus, had not two Highlanders seized him by the arms, two more pushed him on behind, while a fifth exclaimed, 'Hout awa wi' the daft Sassenach! does she no hear the Laird bidding her up to her ain castle, wi' her special voice, and isna that very mickle honour for the like o' her?'

Thus impelled, Captain Dalgetty could only for a short space keep a reverted eye towards the galley in which he had left the partner of his military toils. In a few minutes afterwards he found himself involved in the total darkness of a staircase which, entering from the low-browed cavern we have mentioned, winded upwards through the entrails of the living rock.

'The cursed Highland salvages!' muttered the Captain, half aloud; 'what is to become of me if Gustavus, the namesake of the invincible Lion of the Protestant League, should be lamed among their untenty hands!'

'Have no fear of that,' said the voice of Sir Duncan, who was nearer to him than he imagined; 'my men are accustomed to handle horses, both in embarking and dressing them, and you will soon see Gustavus as safe as when you last dismounted from his back.'

Captain Dalgetty knew the world too well to offer any farther remonstrance, whatever uneasiness he might suppress within his own bosom. A step or two higher up the stair showed light and a door, and an iron-grated wicket led him out upon a gallery cut in the open face of the rock, extending a space of about six or eight yards, until he reached a second door, where the path re-entered the rock, and which was also defended by an iron portcullis. 'An admirable traverse,' observed the Captain; 'and if commanded by a field-piece, or even a few muskets, quite sufficient to ensure the place against a storming party.'

Sir Duncan Campbell made no answer at the time; but, the moment afterwards, when they had entered the second cavern, he struck with the stick which he had in his hand first on the one side and then on the other of the wicket, and the sullen ringing sound which replied to the blows made Captain Dalgetty sensible that there was a gun placed on each side, for the purpose of raking the gallery through which they had passed, although the embrasures, through which they might be fired on occasion, were masked on the outside with sods and loose stones. Having ascended the second staircase, they found themselves again on an open platform and gallery, exposed to a fire both of musketry and wall-guns, if, being come with hostile intent, they had ventured farther A third flight of steps, cut in the rock like the former, but not caverned over, led them finally into the battery at the foot of the tower. This last stair also was narrow and steep, and, not to mention the fire which might be directed on it from above, one or two

re olute men, with pikes and battle axes, could have made the pass good against hundreds ; for the staircase would not admit two persons abreast, and was not secured by any sort of balustrade or railing from the sheer and abrupt precipice, on the foot of which the tide now rolled with a voice of thunder. So that, under the jealous precautions used to secure this ancient Celtic fortress, a person of weak nerves and a brain liable to become dizzy might have found it something difficult to have achieved the entrance to the castle even supposing no resistance had been offered.

Captain Dalgetty, too old a soldier to feel such tremors, had no sooner arrived in the courtyard than he protested to God the defences of Sir Duncan's castle reminded him more of the notable fortress of Spandau, situated in the March of Brandenburg, than of any place whilk it had been his fortune to defend in the course of his travels. Nevertheless, he criticised considerably the mode of placing the guns on the battery we have noticed, observing that, 'where cannon were perched, like to scarts or sea-gulls, on the top of a rock, he had ever observed that they astonished more by their noise than they dismayed by the skaith or damage which they occasioned.'

Sir Duncan, without replying, conducted the soldier into the tower, the defences of which were a porteullis and iron-clenched oaken door, the thickness of the wall being the space between them. He had no sooner arrived in a hall hung with tapestry than the Captain prosecuted his military criticism. It was indeed suspended by the sight of an excellent breakfast, of which he partook with great avidity ; but no sooner had he secured this meal than he made the tour of the apartment, examining the ground around the castle very carefully from each window in the room. He then returned to his chair, and, throwing himself back into it at his length, stretched out one manly leg, and, tapping his jack-boot with the riding-rod which he carried in his hand, after the manner of a half-bred man who affects ease in the society of his betters, he delivered his unasked opinion as follows : 'This house of yours, now, Sir Duncan, is a very pretty defensible sort of a tenement, and yet it is hardly such as a cavaliero of honour would expect to maintain his credit by holding out for many days. For, Sir Duncan, if it pleases you to notice, your house is overcrowed and slighted, or commanded, as we military men say, by yonder round hillock to the landward, whereon an enemy might stell such a battery of cannon as would make ye glad to beat a chamade within

forty-eight hours, unless it pleased the lord extraordinarily to show mercy.'

'There is no road,' replied Sir Duncan, somewhat shortly, 'by which cannon can be brought against Ardenvohr. The swamps and morasses around my house would scarce carry your horse and yourself, excepting by such paths as could be rendered impassable within a few hours.'

'Sir Duncan,' said the Captain, 'it is your pleasure to suppose so; and yet we martial men say that where there is a seacoast there is always a naked side, seeing that cannon and munition, where they cannot be transported by land, may be right easily brought by sea near to the place where they are to be put in action. Neither is a castle, however secure in its situation, to be accounted altogether invincible, or, as they say, impregnable; for I protest t' ye, Sir Duncan, that I have known twenty-five men, by the mere surprise and audacity of the attack, win, at point of pike, as strong a hold as this of Ardenvohr, and put to the sword, captivate, or hold to the ransom the defenders, being ten times their own number.'

Notwithstanding Sir Duncan Campbell's knowledge of the world, and his power of concealing his internal emotion, he appeared piqued and hurt at these reflections, which the Captain made with the most unconscious gravity, having merely selected the subject of conversation as one upon which he thought himself capable of shining, and, as they say, of laying down the law, without exactly recollecting that the topic might not be equally agreeable to his landlord.

'To cut this matter short,' said Sir Duncan, with an expression of voice and countenance somewhat agitated, 'it is unnecessary for you to tell me, Captain Dalgetty, that a castle may be stormed if it is not valorously defended, or surprised if it is not heedfully watched. I trust this poor house of mine will not be found in any of these predicaments, should even Captain Dalgetty himself choose to beleaguer it.'

'For all that, Sir Duncan,' answered the persevering commander, 'I would premonish you, as a friend, to trace out a sconce upon that round hill, with a good graffe or ditch, whilk may be easily accomplished by compelling the labour of the boors in the vicinity: it being the custom of the valorous Gustavus Adolphus to fight as much by the spade and shovel as by sword, pike, and musket. Also, I would advise you to fortify the said sconce, not only by a foussee or graffe, but also by certain stackets or palisades.' Here Sir Duncan, becoming

impatient, left the apartment, the Captain following him to the door, and raising his voice as he retreated, until he was fairly out of hearing. 'The whilk stackets or palisades should be artificially framed with re-entering angles and loopholes, or crenelles, for musketry, whereof it shall arise that the foemen —— The Highland brute! the old Highland brute! They are as proud as peacocks, and as obstinate as tups; and here he has missed an opportunity of making his house as pretty an irregular fortification as an invading army ever broke their teeth upon. But I see,' he continued, looking down from the window upon the bottom of the precipice, 'they have got Gustavus safe ashore. Proper fellow! I would know that toss of his head among a whole squadron. I must go to see what they are to make of him.'

He had no sooner reached, however, the court to the seaward, and put himself in the act of descending the staircase, than two Highland sentinels, advancing their Lochaber axes, gave him to understand that this was a service of danger.

'Diavolo!' said the soldier, 'and I have got no password. I could not speak a syllable of their salvage gibberish, an it were to save me from the provost-marshal.'

'I will be your surety, Captain Dalgetty,' said Sir Duncan, who had again approached him without his observing from whence; 'and we will go together and see how your favourite charger is accommodated.'

He conducted him accordingly down the staircase to the beach, and from thence by a short turn behind a large rock, which concealed the stables and other offices belonging to the castle. Captain Dalgetty became sensible, at the same time, that the side of the castle to the land was rendered totally inaccessible by a ravine, partly natural and partly scarped with great care and labour, so as to be only passed by a drawbridge. Still, however, the Captain insisted, notwithstanding the triumphant air with which Sir Duncan pointed out his defences, that a sconce should be erected on Drumsnab, the round eminence to the east of the castle, in respect the house might be annoyed from thence by burning bullets full of fire, shot out of cannon, according to the curious invention of Stephen Bathian, King of Poland, whereby that prince utterly ruined the great Muscovite city of Moscow. This invention, Captain Dalgetty owned, he had not yet witnessed, but observed, 'that it would give him particular delectation to witness the same put to the proof against Ardenvohr or any other castle of similar strength,' observing,

'that so curious an experiment could not but afford the greatest delight to all admirers of the military art.'

Sir Duncan Campbell diverted this conversation by carrying the soldier into his stables, and suffering him to arrange Gustavus according to his own will and pleasure. After this duty had been carefully performed, Captain Dalgetty proposed to return to the castle, observing, it was his intention to spend the time betwixt this and dinner, which, he presumed, would come upon the parade about noon, in burnishing his armour, which, having sustained some injury from the sea air, might, he was afraid, seem discreditable in the eyes of M'Callum More. Yet, while they were returning to the castle, he failed not to warn Sir Duncan Campbell against the great injury he might sustain by any sudden onfall of an enemy, whereby his horses, cattle, and granaries might be cut off and consumed, to his great prejudice; wherefore he again strongly conjured him to construct a sconce upon the round hill called Drumsnab, and offered his own friendly services in lining out the same. To this disinterested advice Sir Duncan only replied by ushering his guest to his apartment, and informing him that the tolling of the castle bell would make him aware when dinner was ready.

CHAPTER XI

Is this thy castle, Baldwin? Melancholy
Displays her sable banner from the donjon,
Darkening the foam of the whole surge beneath.
Were I a haunitant, to see this gloom
Pollute the face of nature, and to hear
The ceaseless sound of wave, and seabird's scream,
I'd wish me in the hut that poorest peasant
E'er framed to give him temporary shelter.

BROWN.

THE gallant Rittmaster would willingly have employed his leisure in studying the exterior of Sir Duncan's castle, and verifying his own military ideas upon the nature of its defences; but a stout sentinel, who mounted guard with a Lochaber axe at the door of his apartment, gave him to understand, by very significant signs, that he was in a sort of honourable captivity.

'It is strange,' thought the Rittmaster to himself, 'how well these salvages understand the rules and practique of war. Who would have presupposed their acquaintance with the maxim of the great and godlike Gustavus Adolphus, that a flag of truce should be half a messenger, half a spy?' And, having finished burnishing his arms, he sate down patiently to compute how much half a dollar per diem would amount to at the end of a six months' campaign; and, when he had settled that problem, proceeded to the more abstruse calculations necessary for drawing up a brigade of two thousand men on the principle of extracting the square root.

From his musings he was roused by the joyful sound of the dinner bell, on which the Highlander, lately his guard, became his gentleman-usher, and marshalled him to the hall, where a table with four covers bore ample proofs of Highland hospitality. Sir Duncan entered, conducting his lady, a tall, faded, melancholy female, dressed in deep mourning. They were followed by a Presbyterian clergyman, in his Geneva

cloak, and wearing a black silk scull-cap, covering his short hair so closely that it could scarce be seen at all, so that the unrestricted ears had an undue predominance in the general aspect. This ungraceful fashion was universal at the time, and partly led to the nicknames of roundheads, prick-eared curs, and so forth, which the insolence of the Cavaliers liberally bestowed on their political enemies.

Sir Duncan presented his military guest to his lady, who received his technical salutation with a stiff and silent reverence, in which it could scarce be judged whether pride or melancholy had the greater share. The churchman, to whom he was next presented, eyed him with a glance of mingled dislike and curiosity.

The Captain, well accustomed to worse looks from more dangerous persons, cared very little either for those of the lady or of the divine, but bent his whole soul upon assaulting a huge piece of beef which smoked at the nether end of the table. But the onslaught, as he would have termed it, was delayed until the conclusion of a very long grace, betwixt every section of which Dalgetty handled his knife and fork as he might have done his musket or pike when going upon action, and as often resigned them unwillingly when the prolix chaplain commenced another clause of his benediction. Sir Duncan listened with decency, though he was supposed rather to have joined the Covenanters out of devotion to his chief than real respect for the cause either of liberty or of Presbytery. His lady alone attended to the blessing with symptoms of deep acquiescence.

The meal was performed almost in Carthusian silence; for it was none of Captain Dalgetty's habits to employ his mouth in talking while it could be more profitably occupied. Sir Duncan was absolutely silent, and the lady and churchman only occasionally exchanged a few words, spoken low and indistinctly.

But, when the dishes were removed and their place supplied by liquors of various sorts, Captain Dalgetty no longer had himself the same weighty reasons for silence, and began to tire of that of the rest of the company. He commenced a new attack upon his landlord, upon the former ground. "Touching that round monticle or hill or eminence termed Drumsnab, I would be proud to hold some dialogue with you, Sir Duncan, on the nature of the sconce to be there constructed; and whether the angles thereof should be acute or obtuse, anent which I have heard the great Velt-Mareschal Bunnier hold

a learned argument with General Tiefenbach during a still-stand of arms.'

'Captain Dalgetty,' answered Sir Duncan, very drily, 'it is not our Highland usage to debate military points with strangers. This castle is like to hold out against a stronger enemy than any force which the unfortunate gentlemen we left at Darnlinvarach are able to bring against it.'

A deep sigh from the lady accompanied the conclusion of her husband's speech, which seemed to remind her of some painful circumstance.

'He who gave,' said the clergyman, addressing her in a solemn tone, 'hath taken away. May you, honourable lady, be long enabled to say, "Blessed be His name!"'

To this exhortation, which seemed intended for her sole behoof, the lady answered by an inclination of her head, more humble than Captain Dalgetty had yet observed her make. Supposing he should now find her in a more conversible humour, he proceeded to accost her.

'It is indubitably very natural that your ladyship should be downcast at the mention of military preparations, whilk I have observed to spread perturbation among women of all nations and almost all conditions. Nevertheless, Penthesilea, in ancient times, and also Joan of Arc and others, were of a different kidney. And, as I have learned while I served the Spaniard, the Duke of Alva in former times had the leaguer lasses who followed his camp marshalled into *tertias*, whilk we call regiments, and officered and commanded by those of their own feminine gender, and regulated by a commander-in-chief, called in German *Hurencibler*, or, as we would say vernacularly, Captain of the Queans. True it is, they were persons not to be named as parallel to your ladyship, being such *quæ quæstum corporibus faciebant*, as we said of Jean Drochiels at Marischal College; the same whom the French term *courtisanes*, and we in Scottish ——'

'The lady will spare you the trouble of further exposition, Captain Dalgetty,' said his host, somewhat sternly; to which the clergyman added, 'that such discourse better befitted a watch-tower guarded by profane soldiery than the board of an honourable person and the presence of a lady of quality.'

'Craving your pardon, Dominie, or Doctor, *aut quocunque alio nomine gaudes*, for I would have you to know I have studied polite letters,' said the unabashed envoy, filling a great cup of wine, 'I see no ground for your reproof, seeing I did not speak

of those *turpes personæ* as if their occupation or character was a proper subject of conversation for this lady's presence, but simply *par accident*, as illustrating the matter in hand, namely, their natural courage and audacity, much enhanced, doubtless, by the desperate circumstances of their condition.'

'Captain Dalgetty,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'to break short this discourse, I must acquaint you that I have some business to despatch to-night, in order to enable me to ride with you to-morrow towards Inverary; and therefore ——'

'To ride with this person to morrow!' exclaimed his lady; 'such cannot be your purpose, Sir Duncan, unless you have forgotten that the morrow is a sad anniversary, and dedicated to as sad a solemnity.'

'I had not forgotten,' answered Sir Duncan: 'how is it possible I can ever forget! but the necessity of the times requires I should send this officer onward to Inverary without loss of time.'

'Yet surely not that you should accompany him in person?' inquired the lady.

'It were better I did,' said Sir Duncan: 'yet I can write to the Marquis, and follow on the subsequent day. Captain Dalgetty, I will despatch a letter for you, explaining to the Marquis of Argyle your character and commission, with which you will please to prepare to travel to Inverary early to-morrow morning.'

'Sir Duncan Campbell,' said Dalgetty, 'I am doubtless at your discretionary disposal in this matter; not the less, I pray you to remember the blot which will fall upon your own escutcheon if you do in any way suffer me, being a commissionate flag of truce, to be circumvented in this matter, whether *clam, ci, vel precario*; I do not say by your assent to any wrong done to me, but even through absence of any due care on your part to prevent the same.'

'You are under the safeguard of my honour, sir,' answered Sir Duncan Campbell, 'and that is more than a sufficient security. And now,' continued he, rising, 'I must set the example of retiring.'

Dalgetty saw himself under the necessity of following the hint, though the hour was early: but, like a skilful general, he availed himself of every instant of delay which circumstances permitted. 'Trusting to your honourable parole,' said he, filling his cup, 'I drink to you, Sir Duncan, and to the continuance of your honourable house.' A sigh from Sir

Duncan was the only reply. 'Also, madam,' said the soldier, replenishing the quaigh with all possible despatch, 'I drink to your honourable health, and fulfilment of all your virtuous desires; and, reverend sir (not forgetting to fit the action to the words), I fill this cup to the drowning of all unkindness betwixt you and Captain Dalgetty — I should say Major; and, in respect the flagon contains but one cup more, I drink to the health of all honourable cavaliers and brave soldados; and, the flask being empty, I am ready, Sir Duncan, to attend your functionary or sentinel to my place of private repose.'

He received a formal permission to retire, and an assurance that, as the wine seemed to be to his taste, another measure of the same vintage should attend him presently, in order to soothe the hours of his solitude.

No sooner had the Captain reached the apartment than this promise was fulfilled; and, in a short time afterwards, the added comforts of a pasty of red-deer venison rendered him very tolerant both of confinement and want of society. The same domestic, a sort of chamberlain, who placed this good cheer in his apartment, delivered to Dalgetty a packet, sealed and tied up with a silken thread, according to the custom of the time, addressed with many forms of respect to the High and Mighty Prince, Archibald, Marquis of Argyle, Lord of Lorne, and so forth. The chamberlain at the same time apprised the Rittmaster that he must take horse at an early hour for Inverary, where the packet of Sir Duncan would be at once his introduction and his passport. Not forgetting that it was his object to collect information as well as to act as an envoy, and desirous, for his own sake, to ascertain Sir Duncan's reasons for sending him onward without his personal attendance, the Rittmaster inquired of the domestic, with all the precaution that his experience suggested, what were the reasons which detained Sir Duncan at home on the succeeding day. The man, who was from the Lowlands, replied, 'that it was the habit of Sir Duncan and his lady to observe as a day of solemn fast and humiliation the anniversary on which their castle had been taken by surprise, and their children, to the number of four, destroyed cruelly, by a band of Highland free-booters during Sir Duncan's absence upon an expedition which the Marquis of Argyle had undertaken against the Macleans of the Isle of Mull.'

'Truly,' said the soldier, 'your lord and lady have some cause for fast and humiliation. Nevertheless, I will venture

to pronounce that, if he had taken the advice of any experienced soldier, having skill in the practiques of defending places of advantage, he would have built a sconce upon the small hill which is to the left of the drawbrig. And this I can easily prove to you, mine honest friend; for, holding that pasty to be the castle —— What 's your name, friend?'

'Lorimer, sir,' replied the man.

'Here is to your health, honest Lorimer. I say, Lorimer, holding that pasty to be the main body or citadel of the place to be defended, and taking the marrow-bone for the sconce to be erected ——'

'I am sorry, sir,' said Lorimer, interrupting him, 'that I cannot stay to hear the rest of your demonstration; but the bell will presently ring. As worthy Mr. Grameangowl, the Marquis's own chaplain, does family worship, and only seven of our household out of sixty persons understand the Scottish tongue, it would misbecome any one of them to be absent, and greatly prejudice me in the opinion of my lady. There are pipes and tobacco, sir, if you please to drink a whiff of smoke, and if you want anything else, it shall be forthcoming two hours hence, when prayers are over.' So saying, he left the apartment.

No sooner was he gone than the heavy toll of the castle bell summoned its inhabitants together; and was answered by the shrill clamour of the females, mixed with the deeper tones of the men, as, talking Earse at the top of their throats, they hurried from different quarters by a long but narrow gallery, which served as a communication to many rooms, and, among others, to that in which Captain Dalgetty was stationed. 'There they go as if they were beating to the roll-call,' thought the soldier to himself; 'if they all attend the parade, I will look out, take a mouthful of fresh air, and make mine own observations on the practicabilities of this place.'

Accordingly, when all was quiet, he opened his chamber door and prepared to leave it, when he saw his friend with the axe advancing towards him from the distant end of the gallery, half whistling, half-humming a Gaelic tune. To have shown any want of confidence would have been at once impolitic and unbecoming his military character; so the Captain, putting the best face upon his situation he could, whistled a Swedish retreat in a tone still louder than the notes of his sentinel; and, retreating pace by pace, with an air of indifference, as if his only purpose had been to breathe a little fresh air, he shut the door in

the face of his guard, when the fellow had approached within a few paces of him.

'It is very well,' thought the Rittmaster to himself; 'he annuls my parole by putting guards upon me, for, as we used to say at Marischal College, *fides et fiducia sunt relativa*;[1] and if he does not trust my word, I do not see how I am bound to keep it, if any motive should occur for my desiring to depart from it. Surely the moral obligation of the parole is relaxed, in as far as physical force is substituted instead thereof.'

Thus comforting himself in the metaphysical immunities which he deduced from the vigilance of his sentinel, Rittmaster Dalgetty retired to his apartment, where, amid the theoretical calculations of tactics and the occasional more practical attacks on the flask and pasty, he consumed the evening until it was time to go to repose. He was summoned by Lorimer at break of day, who gave him to understand that, when he had broken his fast, for which he produced ample materials, his guide and horse were in attendance for his journey to Inverary. After complying with the hospitable hint of the chamberlain, the soldier proceeded to take horse. In passing through the apartments, he observed that domestics were busily employed in hanging the great hall with black cloth, a ceremony which, he said, he had seen practised when the immortal Gustavus Adolphus lay in state in the Castle of Wolgast, and which, therefore, he opined, was a testimonial of the strictest and deepest mourning.

When Dalgetty mounted his steed, he found himself attended, or perhaps guarded, by five or six Campbells, well armed, commanded by one who, from the target at his shoulder and the short cock's feather in his bonnet, as well as from the state which he took upon himself, claimed the rank of a duinhéwassel or clansman of superior rank; and indeed, from his dignity of deportment, could not stand in a more distant degree of relationship to Sir Duncan than that of tenth or twelfth cousin at farthest. But it was impossible to extract positive information on this or any other subject, inasmuch as neither this commander nor any of his party spoke English. The Captain rode and his military attendants walked; but such was their activity, and so numerous the impediments which the nature of the road presented to the equestrian mode of travelling, that, far from being retarded by the slowness of their pace, his difficulty was rather in keeping up with his guides. He observed that

[1] See Note 4.

they occasionally watched him with a sharp eye, as if they were jealous of some effort to escape; and once, as he lingered behind at crossing a brook, one of the gillies began to blow the match of his piece, giving him to understand that he would run some risk in case of an attempt to part company. Dalgetty did not augur much good from the close watch thus maintained upon his person; but there was no remedy, for an attempt to escape from his attendants in an impervious and unknown country would have been little short of insanity. He therefore plodded patiently on through a waste and savage wilderness, treading paths which were only known to the shepherds and cattle-drivers, and passing with much more of discomfort than satisfaction many of those sublime combinations of mountainous scenery which now draw visitors from every corner of England to feast their eyes upon Highland grandeur and mortify their palates upon Highland fare.

At length they arrived on the southern verge of that noble lake upon which Inverary is situated: and a bugle, which the duinhéwassel winded till rock and greenwood rang, served as a signal to a well-manned galley, which, starting from a creek where it lay concealed, received the party on board, including Gustavus; which sagacious quadruped, an experienced traveller both by water and land, walked in and out of the boat with the discretion of a Christian.

Embarked on the bosom of Loch Fine, Captain Dalgetty might have admired one of the grandest scenes which nature affords. He might have noticed the rival rivers Aray and Shira, which pay tribute to the lake, each issuing from its own dark and wooded retreat. He might have marked, on the soft and gentle slope that ascends from the shores, the noble old Gothic castle, with its varied outline, embattled walls, towers, and outer and inner courts, which, so far as the picturesque is concerned, presented an aspect much more striking than the present massive and uniform mansion. He might have admired those dark woods which for many a mile surrounded this strong and princely dwelling, and his eye might have dwelt on the picturesque peak of Duniquoich, starting abruptly from the lake, and raising its scathed brow into the mists of middle sky, while a solitary watch tower, perched on its top like an eagle's nest, gave dignity to the scene by awakening a sense of possible danger. All these, and every other accompaniment of this noble scene, Captain Dalgetty might have marked if he had been so minded. But, to confess the truth, the gallant Captain, who had eaten

nothing since daybreak, was chiefly interested by the smoke which ascended from the castle chimneys, and the expectations which this seemed to warrant of his encountering an abundant stock of provant, as he was wont to call supplies of this nature.

The boat soon approached the rugged pier, which abutted into the loch from the little town of Inverary, then a rude assemblage of huts, with a very few stone mansions interspersed, stretching upwards from the banks of Loch Fine to the principal gate of the castle, before which a scene presented itself that might easily have quelled a less stout heart and turned a more delicate stomach than those of Rittmaster Dugald Dalgetty, titular of Drumthwacket.

CHAPTER XII

For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
Restless, unfix'd in principle and place,
In power unpleased, impatient in disgrace.

Absalom and Achitophel.

THE village of Inverary, now a neat country town, then partook of the rudeness of the 17th century, in the miserable appearance of the houses and the irregularity of the unpaved street. But a stronger and more terrible characteristic of the period appeared in the market-place, which was a space of irregular width, half-way betwixt the harbour or pier and the frowning castle gate, which terminated with its gloomy archway, portcullis, and flankers the upper end of the vista. Midway this space was erected a rude gibbet, on which hung five dead bodies, two of which from their dress seemed to have been Lowlanders, and the other three corpses were muffled in their Highland plaids. Two or three women sate under the gallows, who seemed to be mourning and singing the coronach of the deceased in a low voice. But the spectacle was apparently of too ordinary occurrence to have much interest for the inhabitants at large, who, while they thronged to look at the military figure, the horse of an unusual size, and the burnished panoply of Captain Dalgetty, seemed to bestow no attention whatever on the piteous spectacle which their own market-place afforded.

The envoy of Montrose was not quite so indifferent; and, hearing a word or two of English escape from a Highlander of decent appearance, he immediately halted Gustavus and addressed him. —'The provost-marshal has been busy here, my friend. May I crave of you what these delinquents have been justified for?'

He looked towards the gibbet as he spoke; and the Gael, comprehending his meaning rather by his action than his

words, immediately replied, 'Three gentlemen caterans — God sain them (crossing himself) twa Sassenach bits o' bodies that wadna do something that M'Callum More bade them'; and, turning from Dalgetty with an air of indifference, away he walked, staying no farther question.

Dalgetty shrugged his shoulders and proceeded, for Sir Duncan Campbell's tenth or twelfth cousin had already shown some signs of impatience.

At the gate of the castle another terrible spectacle of feudal power awaited him. Within a stockade or palisade, which seemed lately to have been added to the defences of the gate, and which was protected by two pieces of light artillery, was a small inclosure, where stood a huge block, on which lay an axe. Both were smeared with recent blood, and a quantity of sawdust strewed around partly retained and partly obliterated the marks of a very late execution.

As Dalgetty looked on this new object of terror, his principal guide suddenly twitched him by the skirt of his jerkin, and having thus attracted his attention, winked and pointed with his finger to a pole fixed on the stockade, which supported a human head, being that, doubtless, of the late sufferer. There was a leer on the Highlander's face as he pointed to this ghastly spectacle which seemed to his fellow-traveller ominous of nothing good.

Dalgetty dismounted from his horse at the gateway, and Gustavus was taken from him without his being permitted to attend him to the stable, according to his custom.

This gave the soldier a pang which the apparatus of death had not conveyed. 'Poor Gustavus!' said he to himself, 'if anything but good happens to me, I had better have left him at Darnlinvarach than brought him here among these Highland salvages, who scarce know the head of a horse from his tail. But duty must part a man from his nearest and dearest

> When the cannons are roaring, lads, and the colours are flying,
> The lads that seek honour must never fear dying;
> Then, stout cavaliers, let us toil our brave trade in,
> And fight for the Gospel and the bold King of Sweden.'

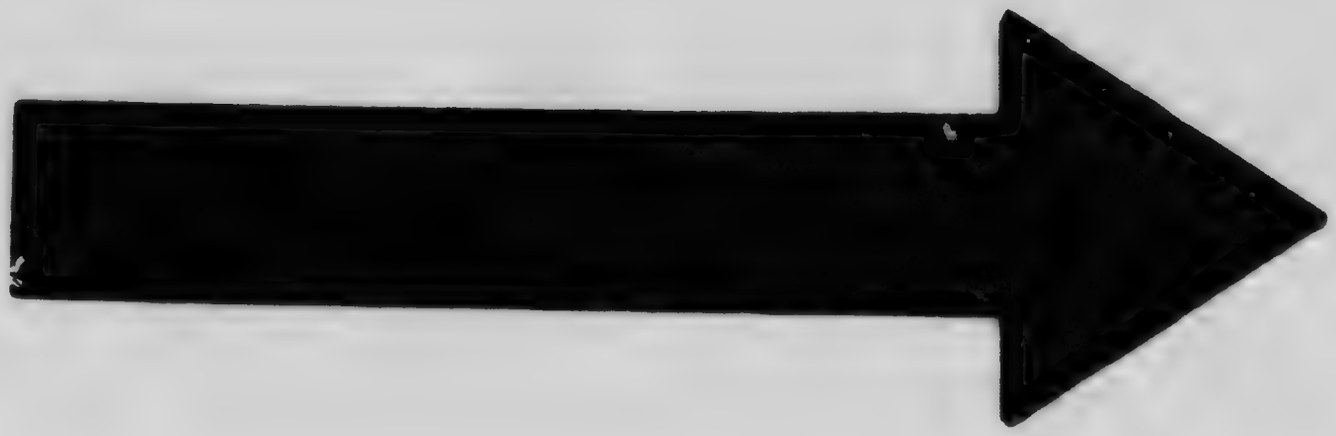
Thus silencing his apprehensions with the butt-end of a military ballad, he followed his guide into a sort of guard-room filled with armed Highlanders. It was intimated to him that he must remain here until his arrival was communicated to the Marquis. To make this communication the more intelligible,

the doughty Captain gave to the duinhéwassel Sir Duncan Campbell's packet, desiring, as well as he could, by signs, that it should be delivered into the Marquis's own hand. His guide nodded and withdrew.

The Captain was left about half an hour in this place, to endure with indifference or return with scorn the inquisitive, and, at the same time, the inimical glances of the armed Gael, to whom his exterior and equipage were as much subject of curiosity as his person and country seemed matter of dislike. All this he bore with military nonchalance, until, at the expiration of the above period, a person dressed in black velvet, and wearing a gold chain like a modern magistrate of Edinburgh, but who was, in fact, steward of the household to the Marquis of Argyle, entered the apartment, and invited, with solemn gravity, the Captain to follow him to his master's presence.

The suite of apartments through which he passed were filled with attendants or visitors of various descriptions, disposed, perhaps, with some ostentation, in order to impress the envoy of Montrose with an idea of the superior power and magnificence belonging to the rival house of Argyle. One ante-room was filled with lacqueys, arrayed in brown and yellow, the colours of the family, who, ranged in double file, gazed in silence upon Captain Dalgetty as he passed betwixt their ranks. Another was occupied by Highland gentlemen and chiefs of small branches, who were amusing themselves with chess, backgammon, and other games, which they scarce intermitted to gaze with curiosity upon the stranger. A third was filled with Lowland gentlemen and officers, who seemed also in attendance; and, lastly, the presence-chamber of the Marquis himself showed him attended by a levee which marked his high importance.

This apartment, the folding doors of which were opened for the reception of Captain Dalgetty, was a long gallery, decorated with tapestry and family portraits, and having a vaulted ceiling of open woodwork, the extreme projections of the beams being richly carved and gilded. The gallery was lighted by long lanceolated Gothic casements, divided by heavy shafts, and filled with painted glass, where the sunbeams glimmered dimly through boars' heads, and galleys, and batons, and swords — armorial bearings of the powerful house of Argyle, and emblems of the high hereditary offices of Justiciary of Scotland and Master of the Royal Household, which they long enjoyed. At the upper end of this magnificent gallery stood the Marquis himself, the centre of a splendid circle of Highland and Low-



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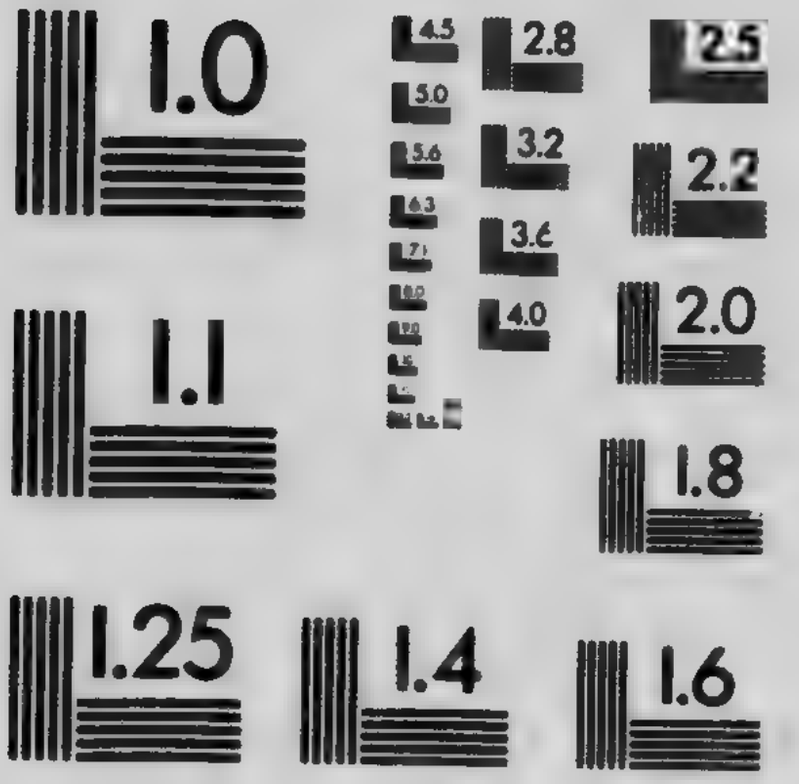

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land gentlemen, all richly dressed, among whom were two or three of the clergy, called in, perhaps, to be witnesses of his lordship's zeal for the Covenant.

The Marquis himself was dressed in the fashion of the period, which Vandyke has so often painted; but his habit was sober and uniform in colour, and rather rich than gay. His dark complexion, furrowed forehead, and downcast look gave him the appearance of one frequently engaged in the consideration of important affairs, and who has acquired by long habit an air of gravity and mystery which he cannot shake off even where there is nothing to be concealed. The cast with his eyes, which had procured him in the Highlands the nickname of Gillespie Grumach (or the grim), was less perceptible when he looked downward, which perhaps was one cause of his having adopted that habit. In person he was tall and thin, but not without that dignity of deportment and manners which became his high rank. Something there was cold in his address and sinister in his look, although he spoke and behaved with the usual grace of a man of such quality. He was adored by his own clan, whose advancement he had greatly studied, although he was in proportion disliked by the Highlanders of other septs, some of whom he had already stripped of their possessions, while others conceived themselves in danger from his future schemes, and all dreaded the height to which he was elevated.

We have already noticed that, in displaying himself amidst his councillors, his officers of the household, and his train of vassals, allies, and dependants, the Marquis of Argyle probably wished to make an impression on the nervous system of Captain Dugald Dalgetty. But that doughty person had fought his way, in one department or another, through the greater part of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, a period when a brave and successful soldier was a companion for princes. The King of Sweden, and, after his example, even the haughty Princes of the Empire, had found themselves fain frequently to compound with their dignity, and silence, when they could not satisfy, the pecuniary claims of their soldiers by admitting them to unusual privileges and familiarity. Captain Dugald Dalgetty had it to boast that he had sate with princes at feasts made for monarchs, and therefore was not a person to be browbeat even by the dignity which surrounded M'Callum More. Indeed, he was naturally by no means the most modest man in the world, but, on the contrary, had so good an opinion of himself that, into whatever company he chanced to be thrown, he was alway

proportionally elevated in his own conceit; so that he felt as much at ease in the most exalted society as among his own ordinary companions. In this high opinion of his own rank he was greatly fortified by his ideas of the military profession, which, in his parase, made a valiant cavalier a *camarado* to an emperor.

When introduced, therefore, into the Marquis's presence-chamber, he advanced to the upper end with an air of more confidence than grace, and would have gone close up to Argyle's person before speaking had not the latter waved his hand as a signal to him to stop short. Captain Dalgetty did so accordingly, and, having made his military congee with easy confidence, he thus accosted the Marquis: 'Give you good-morrow, my lord; or rather I should say, good-even. "*Beso a usted los manos*," as the Spaniard says.'

'Who are you, sir, and what is your business?' demanded the Marquis, in a tone which was intended to interrupt the offensive familiarity of the soldier.

'That is a fair interrogative, my lord,' answered Dalgetty, 'which I shall forthwith answer as becomes a cavalier, and that *peremptorie*, as we used to say at Marischal College.'

'See who or what he is, Neal,' said the Marquis, sternly, to a gentleman who stood near him.

'I will save the honourable gentleman the labour of investigation,' continued the Captain. 'I am Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, that should be, late Rittmaster in various services, and now Major of I know not what or whose regiment of Irishes; and I am come with a flag of truce from a high and powerful lord, James Earl of Montrose, and other noble persons now in arms for his Majesty. And so, "God save King Charles!"'

'Do you know where you are, and the danger of dallying with us, sir,' again demanded the Marquis, 'that you reply to me as if I were a child or a fool? The Earl of Montrose is with the English malignants; and I suspect you are one of those Irish runagates who are come into this country to burn and slay, as they did under Sir Phelim O'Neale.'

'My lord,' replied Captain Dalgetty, 'I am no renegade, though a Major of Irishes, for which I might refer your lordship to the invincible Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, to Bannier, to Oxenstiern, to the warlike Duke of Saxe-Weimar, Tilly, Wallenstein, Piccolomini, and other great captains, both dead and living; as touching the noble Earl of Montrose, I pray your lordship to peruse these my full

powers for treating with you in the name of that right honourable commander.'

The Marquis looked slightingly at the signed and sealed paper which Captain Dalgetty handed to him, and, throwing it with contempt upon a table, asked those around him what he deserved who came as the avowed envoy and agent of malignant traitors, in arms against the state.

'A high gallows and a short shrift,' was the ready answer of one of the bystanders.

'I will crave of that honourable cavalier who hath last spoken,' said Dalgetty, 'to be less hasty in forming his conclusions, and also of your lordship to be cautelous in adopting the same, in respect such threats are to be held out only to base bisognos, and not to men of spirit and action, who are bound to peril themselves as freely in services of this nature as upon sieges, battles, or onslaughts of any sort. And albeit I have not with me a trumpet or a white flag, in respect our army is not yet equipped with its full appointments, yet the honourable cavaliers and your lordship must concede unto me that the sanctity of an envoy who cometh on matter of truce or parle consisteth not in the fanfare of a trumpet, whilk is but a sound, or in the flap of a white flag, whilk is but an old rag in itself, but in the confidence reposed, by the party sending and the party sent, in the honour of those to whom the message is to be carried, and their full reliance that they will respect the *jus gentium*, as weel as the law of arms, in the person of the commissionate.'

'You are not come hither to lecture us upon the law of arms, sir,' said the Marquis, 'which neither does nor can apply to rebels and insurgents; but to suffer the penalty of your insolence and folly for bringing a traitorous message to the Lord Justice-General of Scotland, whose duty calls upon him to punish such an offence with death.'

'Gentlemen,' said the Captain, who began much to dislike the turn which his mission seemed about to take, 'I pray you to remember that the Earl of Montrose will hold you and your possessions liable for whatever injury my person or my horse shall sustain by these unseemly proceedings, and that he will be justified in executing retributive vengeance on your persons and possessions.'

This menace was received with a scornful laugh, while one of the Campbells replied, 'It is a far cry to Lochow,' a proverbial expression of the tribe, meaning that their ancient

hereditary dom[illegible]y beyond the reach of an invading enemy. 'But, gentlemen, further urged the unfortunate Captain, who was unwilling to be condemned without at least the benefit of a full hearing, 'although it is not for me to say how far it may be to Lochow, in respect I am a stranger to these parts, yet, what is more to the purpose, I trust you will admit that I have the guarantee of an honourable gentleman of your own name, Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, for my safety on this mission; and I pray you to observe that, in breaking the truce towards me, you will highly prejudicate his honour and fair fame.'

This seemed to be new information to many of the gentlemen, for they spoke aside with each other, and the Marquis's face, notwithstanding his power of suppressing all external signs of his passions, showed impatience and vexation.

'Does Sir Duncan of Ardenvohr pledge his honour for this person's safety, my lord?' said one of the company, addressing the Marquis.

'I do not believe it,' answered the Marquis; 'but I have not yet had time to read his letter.'

'We will pray your lordship to do so,' said another of the Campbells; 'our name must not suffer discredit through the means of such a fellow as this.'

'A dead fly,' said a clergyman, 'maketh the ointment of the apothecary to stink.'

'Reverend sir,' said Captain Dalgetty, 'in respect of the use to be derived, I forgive you the unsavouriness of your comparison; and also remit to the gentleman in the red bonnet the disparaging epithet of "fellow" which he has discourteously applied to me, who am no way to be distinguished by the same, unless in so far as I have been called fellow-soldier by the great Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and other choice commanders, both in Germany and the Low Countries. But, touching Sir Duncan Campbell's guarantee of my safety, I will gage my life upon his making my words good thereanent when he comes hither to-morrow.'

'If Sir Duncan be soon expected, my lord,' said one of the intercessors, 'it would be a pity to anticipate matters with this poor man.'

'Besides that,' said another, 'your lordship — I speak with reverence — should, at least, consult the Knight of Ardenvohr's letter, and learn the terms on which this Major Dalgetty, as he calls himself, has been sent hither by him.'

They closed around the Marquis, and conversed together in a low tone, both in Gaelic and English. The patriarchal power of the Chiefs was very great, and that of the Marquis of Argyle, armed with all his grants of hereditary jurisdiction, was particularly absolute. But there interferes some check of one kind or other even in the most despotic government. That which mitigated the power of the Celtic Chiefs was the necessity which they lay under of conciliating the kinsmen, who, under them, led out the lower orders to battle, and who formed a sort of council of the tribe in time of peace. The Marquis on this occasion thought himself under the necessity of attending to the remonstrances of this senate, or more properly *couronltai*, of the name of Campbell, and, slipping out of the circle, gave orders for the prisoner to be removed to a place of security.

'Prisoner!' exclaimed Dalgetty, exerting himself with such force as well-nigh to shake off two Highlanders who for some minutes past had waited the signal to seize him, and kept for that purpose close at his back. Indeed, the soldier had so nearly attained his liberty that the Marquis of Argyle changed colour and stepped back two paces, laying, however, his hand on his sword, while several of his clan, with ready devotion, threw themselves betwixt him and the apprehended vengeance of the prisoner. But the Highland guards were too strong to be shaken off, and the unlucky Captain, after having had his offensive weapons taken from him, was dragged off and conducted through several gloomy passages to a small side-door grated with iron, within which was another of wood. These were opened by a grim old Highlander with a long white beard, and displayed a very steep and narrow flight of steps leading downward. The Captain's guards pushed him down two or three steps, then, unloosing his arms, left him to grope his way to the bottom as he could; a task which became difficult and even dangerous, when the two doors being successively locked left the prisoner in total darkness.

CHAPTER XIII

Whatever stranger visits here,
We pity his sad case,
Unless to worship he draw near
The King of Kings — his Grace.

BURNS's *Epigram on a Visit to Inverary.*

THE Captain, finding himself deprived of light in the manner we have described, and placed in a very uncertain situation, proceeded to descend the narrow and broken stair with all the caution in his power, hoping that he might find at the bottom some place to repose himself. But with all his care he could not finally avoid making a false step, which brought him down the four or five last steps too hastily to preserve his equilibrium. At the bottom he stumbled over a bundle of something soft, which stirred and uttered a groan, so deranging the Captain's descent that he floundered forward, and finally fell upon his hands and knees on the floor of a damp and stone-paved dungeon.

When Dalgetty had recovered, his first demand was to know over whom he had stumbled.

'He was a man a month since,' answered a hollow and broken voice.

'And what is he now, then,' said Dalgetty, 'that he thinks it fitting to lie upon the lowest step of the stairs, and clew'd up like a hurchin, that honourable cavaliers who chance to be in trouble may break their noses over him?'

'What is he now!' replied the same voice. 'He is a wretched trunk, from which the boughs have one by one been lopped away, and which cares little how soon it is torn up and hewed into billets for the furnace.'

'Friend,' said Dalgetty, 'I am sorry for you; but *patienza*, as the Spaniard says. If you had but been as quiet as a log, as you call yourself, I should have saved some excoriations on my hands and knees.'

'You are a soldier,' replied his fellow-prisoner; 'do you complain on account of a fall for which a boy would not bemoan himself?'

'A soldier!' said the Captain. 'And how do you know, in this cursed dark cavern, that I am a soldier?'

'I heard your armour clash as you fell,' replied the prisoner, 'and now I see it glimmer. When you have remained as long as I in this darkness, your eyes will distinguish the smallest eft that crawls on the floor.'

'I had rather the devil picked them out!' said Dalgetty; 'if this be the case, I shall wish for a short turn of the rope, a soldier's prayer, and a leap from a ladder. But what sort of 'provant have you got here — what food, I mean, brother in affliction?'

'Bread and water once a-day,' replied the voice.

'Pri'thee, friend, let me taste your loaf,' said Dalgetty. 'I hope we shall play good comrades while we dwell together in this abominable pit.'

'The loaf and jar of water,' answered the other prisoner, 'stand in the corner, two steps to your right hand. Take them and welcome. With earthly food I have well-nigh done.'

Dalgetty did not wait for a second invitation, but, groping out the provisions, began to munch at the stale black oaten loaf with as much heartiness as we have seen him play his part at better viands.

'This bread,' he said, muttering, with his mouth full at the same time, 'is not very savoury; nevertheless, it is not much worse than that which we ate at the famous leaguer at Werben, where the valorous Gustavus foiled all the efforts of the celebrated Tilly, that terrible old hero, who had driven two kings out of the field — namely, Ferdinand of Bohemia and Christian of Denmark. And anent this water, which is none of the most

I drink in the same to your speedy deliverance, comrade, forgetting mine own, and devoutly wishing it were Rhenish or humming Lubeck beer, at the least, were it but in honour of the pledge.'

While Dalgetty ran on in this way, his teeth kept time with his tongue, and he speedily finished the provisions which the benevolence or indifference of his companion in misfortune had abandoned to his voracity. When this task was accomplished, he wrapped himself in his cloak, and seating himself in a corner of the dungeon in which he could obtain a support on each side — for he had always been an admirer of elbow-chairs, he remarked,

even from his youth upward — he began to question his fellow-captive.

'Mine honest friend,' said he, 'you and I, being comrades at bed and board, should be better acquainted. I am Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket, and so forth, Major in a regiment of loyal Irishes, and Envoy Extraordinary of a High and Mighty Lord, James, Earl of Montrose. Pray, what may your name be?'

'It will avail you little to know,' replied his more taciturn companion.

'Let me judge of that matter,' answered the soldier.

'Well then, Ranald MacEagh is my name — that is, Ranald Son of the Mist.'

'Son of the Mist!' ejaculated Dalgetty. 'Son of utter darkness, say I. But, Ranald, since that is your name, how came you in possession of the provost's court of guard? what the devil brought you here, that is to say?'

'My misfortunes and my crimes,' answered Ranald. 'Know ye the Knight of Ardenvohr?'

'I do know that honourable person,' replied Dalgetty.

'But know ye where he now is?' replied Ranald.

'Fasting this day at Ardenvohr,' answered the Envoy, 'that he may feast to-morrow at Inverary; in which last purpose if he chance to fail, my lease of human service will be something precarious.'

'Then let him know one claims his intercession who is his worst foe and his best friend,' answered Ranald.

'Truly I shall desire to carry a less questionable message,' answered Dalgetty. 'Sir Duncan is not a person to play at reading riddles with.'

'Craven Saxon,' said the prisoner, 'tell him I am the raven that, fifteen years since, stooped on his tower of strength and the pledges he had left there; I am the hunter that found out the wolf's den on the rock and destroyed his offspring; I am the leader of the band which surprised Ardenvohr yesterday was fifteen years, and gave his four children to the sword.'

'Truly, my honest friend,' said Dalgetty, 'if that is your best recommendation to Sir Duncan's favour, I would pretermit my pleading thereupon, in respect I have observed that even the animal creation are incensed against those who intromit with their offspring forcibly, much more any rational and Christian creatures who have had violence done upon their small family. But I pray you in courtesy to tell me whether

you assailed the castle from the hillock called Drumsnab, whilk I uphold to be the true point of attack, unless it were to be protected by a sconce.'

'We ascended the cliff by ladders of withies or saplings,' said the prisoner, 'drawn up by an accomplice and clansman, who had served six months in the castle to enjoy that one night of unlimited vengeance. The owl whooped around us as we hung betwixt heaven and earth, the tide roared against the foot of the rock, and dashed asunder our skiff; yet no man's heart failed him. In th morning there was blood and ashes where there had been peace and joy at the sunset.'

'It was a pretty camisade, I doubt not, Ranald MacEagh a very sufficient onslaught, and not unworthily discharged. Nevertheless, I would have pressed the house from that little hillock called Drumsnab. But yours is a pretty irregular Scythian fashion of warfare, Ranald, much resembling that of Turks, Tartars, and other Asiatic people. But the reason, my friend, the cause of this war — the *teterrima causa*, as I may say? Deliver me that, Ranald.'

'We had been pushed at by the M'Aulays and other western tribes,' said Ranald, 'till our possessions became unsafe for us.'

'Ah ha!' said Dalgetty; 'I have faint remembrance of having heard of that matter. Did you not put bread and cheese into a man's mouth, when he had never a stomach whereunto to transmit the same?'

'You have heard, then,' said Ranald, 'the tale of our revenge on the haughty forester?'

'I bethink me that I have,' said Dalgetty, 'and that not of an old date. It was a merry jest that, of cramming the bread into the dead man's mouth, but somewhat too wild and salvage for civilised acceptation, besides wasting the good victuals. I have seen wh- t a siege or a leaguer, Ranald, a living soldier would have - the better, Ranald, for that crust of bread whilk you threw away on a dead pow.'

'We were attacked by Sir Duncan,' continued MacEagh, 'and my brother was slain — his head was withering on the battlements which we scaled; I vowed revenge, and it is a vow I have never broken.'

'It may be so,' said Dalgetty; 'and every thoroughbred soldier will confess that revenge is a sweet morsel; but in what manner this story will interest Sir Duncan in your justification, unless it should move him to intercede with the Marquis to

change the manner thereof from hanging or simple suspension to breaking your limbs on the *roue* or wheel with the coulter of a plough, or otherwise putting you to death by torture, surpasses my comprehension. Were I you, Ranald, I would be for miskenning Sir Duncan, keeping my own secret, and departing quietly by suffocation, like your ancestors before you.'

'Yet hearken, stranger,' said the Highlander. 'Sir Duncan of Ardenvohr had four children. Three died under our dirks, but the fourth survives; and more would he give to dandle on his knee the fourth child which remains than to rack these old bones, which care little for the utmost indulgence of his wrath. One word, if I list to speak it, could turn his day of humiliation and fasting into a day of thankfulness and rejoicing, and breaking of bread. O, I know it by my own heart! Dearer to me is the child Kenneth, who chaseth the butterfly on the banks of the Aven, than ten sons who are mouldering in earth or are preyed on by the fowls of the air.'

'I presume, Ranald,' continued Dalgetty, 'that the three pretty fellows whom I saw yonder in the market place, strung up by the head like rizzered haddocks, claimed some interest in you?'

There was a brief pause ere the Highlander replied, in a tone of strong emotion—'They were my sons, stranger—they were my sons! blood of my blood, bone of my bone! fleet of foot, unerring in aim, unvanquished by foemen till the sons of Diarmid overcame them by numbers! Why do I wish to survive them? The old trunk will less feel the rending up of its roots than it has felt the lopping off of its graceful boughs. But Kenneth must be trained to revenge: the young eagle must learn from the old how to stoop on his foes. I will purchase for his sake my life and my freedom by discovering my secret to the Knight of Ardenvohr.'

'You may attain your end more easily,' said a third voice, mingling in the conference, 'by entrusting it to me.'

All Highlanders are superstitious. 'The Enemy of Mankind is among us!' said Ranald MacEagh, springing to his feet. His chains clattered as he rose, while he drew himself as far as they permitted from the quarter whence the voice appeared to proceed. His fear in some degree communicated itself to Captain Dalgetty, who began to mutter some sort of polyglot gibberish, all the exorcisms he had ever heard of, without being able to remember more than a word or two of each.

'*In nomine Domini*, as we say at Marischal College;

Santissima Madre di Dios, as the Spaniard has it; *Alle guten Geister loben den Herrn*, saith the blessed Psalmist, in Dr Luther's translation ——'

'A truce with your exorcisms,' said the voice they had heard before; 'though I come strangely among you, I am mortal like yourselves, and my assistance may avail you in your present streight, if you are not too proud to be counselled.'

While the stranger thus spoke, he withdrew the shade of a dark lantern, by whose feeble light Dalgetty could only discern that the speaker who had thus mysteriously united himself to their company and mixed in their conversation was a tall man dressed in a livery cloak of the Marquis. His first glance was to his feet, but he saw neither the cloven foot which Scottish legends assign to the foul fiend nor the horse's hoof by which he is distinguished in Germany. His first inquiry was how the stranger had come among them.

'For,' said he, 'the creak of these rusty bars would have been heard had the door been made patent: and if you passed through the keyhole, surely, sir, put what face you will on it, you are not fit to be enrolled in a regiment of living men.'

'I reserve my secret,' answered the stranger, 'until you shall merit the discovery by communicating to me some of yours. It may be that I shall be moved to let you out where I myself came in.'

'It cannot be through the keyhole, then,' said Captain Dalgetty, 'for my corslet would stick in the passage, were it possible that my head-piece could get through. As for secrets, I have none of my own, and but few appertaining to others. But impart to us what secrets you desire to know; or, as Professor Snufflegreek used to say at the Marischal College, Aberdeen, speak that I may know thee.'

'It is not with you I have first to do,' replied the stranger, turning his light full on the wild and wasted features and the large limbs of the Highlander, Ranald Macfarlane, who, close drawn up against the walls of the dungeon, seemed yet uncertain whether his guest was a living being.

'I have brought you something, my friend,' said the stranger, in a more soothing tone, 'to mend your fare; if you are to die to-morrow, it is no reason wherefore you should not live to-night.'

'None at all — no reason in the creation,' replied the ready Captain Dalgetty, who forthwith began to unpack the contents of a small basket which the stranger had brought under his

cloak, while the Highlander, either in suspicion or disdain, paid no attention to the good cheer.

'Here's to thee, my friend,' said the Captain, who, having already despatched a huge piece of roasted kid, was now taking a pull at the wine flask. 'What is thy name, my good friend?'

'Murdoch Carmichael, sir,' answered the servant, 'a lackey of the Marquis of Argyle, occasionally acting as under warden.'

'Then here is to thee once more, Murdoch,' said Dalgetty, 'drinking to you by your proper name for the better luck sake. This wine I take to be Calcavella. Well, honest Murdoch, I take it on me to say, thou deservest to be upper warden, since thou showest thyself twenty times better acquainted with the way of victualling honest gentlemen that are under misfortune in thy principal. Bread and water! out upon him! It was enough, Murdoch, to destroy the credit of the Marquis's dungeon. But I see you would converse with my friend, Ranald MacFagh, here. Never mind my presence: I'll get me into this corner with the basket, and I will warrant my jaws make noise enough to prevent my ears from hearing you.'

Notwithstanding this promise, however, the veteran listened with all the attention he could to gather their discourse, or, as he described it himself, 'laid his ears back in his neck, like Gustavus, when he heard the key turn in the girnel-kist.' He could, therefore, owing to the narrowness of the dungeon, easily overhear the following dialogue:

'Are you aware, Son of the Mist,' said the Campbell, 'that you will never leave this place excepting for the gibbet?'

'Those who are dearest to me,' answered MacFagh, 'have trode that path before me.'

'Then you would do nothing,' asked the visitor, 'to shun following them?'

The prisoner writhed himself in his chains before returning an answer.

'I would do much,' at length he said; 'not for my own life, but for the sake of the pledge in the glen of Strath-Aven.'

'And what would you do to turn away the bitterness of the hour?' again demanded Murdoch. 'I care not for what cause ye mean to shun it.'

'I would do what a man might do and still call himself a man.'

'Do you call yourself a man,' said the interrogator, 'who have done the deeds of a wolf?'

'I do,' answered the outlaw; 'I am a man like my fore-

fathers: while wrapt in the mantle of peace, we were lambs; it was rent from us, and ye now call us wolves. Give us the huts ye have burned, our children whom ye have murdered, our widows whom ye have starved; collect from the gibbet and the pole the mangled carcasses and whitened skulls of our kinsmen; bid them live and bless us, and we will be your vassals and brothers; till then, let death and blood and mutual wrong draw a dark veil of division between us.'

'You will then do nothing for your liberty?' said the Campbell.

'Anything — but call myself the friend of your tribe,' answered MacEagh.

'We scorn the friendship of banditti and caterans,' retorted Murdoch, 'and would not stoop to accept it. What I demand to know from you, in exchange for your liberty, is, where the daughter and heiress of the Knight of Ardenvohr is now to be found?'

'That you may wed her to some beggarly kinsman of your great master,' said Ranald, 'after the fashion of the Children of Diarmid! Does not the valley of Glenorquhy, to this very hour, cry shame on the violence offered to a helpless infant whom her kinsmen were conveying to the court of the Sovereign? Were not her escort compelled to hide her beneath a cauldron, round which they fought till not one remained to tell the tale? and was not the girl brought to this fatal castle, and afterwards wedded to the brother of M'Callum More, and all for the sake of her broad lands?'[1]

'And if the tale be true,' said Murdoch, 'she had a preferment beyond what the King of Scots would have conferred on her. But this is far from the purpose. The daughter of Sir Duncan of Ardenvohr is of our own blood, not a stranger; and who has so good a right to know her fate as M'Callum More, the chief of her clan?'

'It is on his part, then, that you demand it?' said the outlaw. The domestic of the Marquis assented.

'And you will practise no evil against the maiden? I have done her wrong enough already.'

'No evil, upon the word of a Christian man,' replied Murdoch.

'And my guerdon is to be life and liberty?' said the Child of the Mist.

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[1] Such a story is told of the heiress of the clan of Calder, who was made prisoner in the manner described, and afterwards wedded to Sir Duncan Campbell, from which union the Campbells of Cawdor have their descent.

'Such is our paction,' replied the Campbell.

'Then know that the child whom I saved out of compassion at the spoiling of her father's tower of strength was bred as an adopted daughter of our tribe, until we were worsted at the pass of Ballenduthil, by the fiend incarnate and mortal enemy of our tribe, Allan M'Aulay of the Bloody Hand, and by the horsemen of Lennox, under the heir of Menteith.'

'Fell she into the power of Allan of the Bloody Hand,' said Murdoch, 'and she a reputed daughter of thy tribe? Then her blood has gilded the dirk, and thou hast said nothing to rescue thine own forfeited life.'

'If my life rest on hers,' answered the outlaw, 'it is secure, for she still survives; but it has a more insecure reliance — the frail promise of a son of Diarmid.'

'That promise shall not fail you,' said the Campbell, 'if you can assure me that she survives, and where she is to be found.'

'In the Castle of Darnlinvarach,' said Ranald MacEagh, 'under the name of Annot Lyle. I have often heard of her from my kinsmen, who have again approached their native woods, and it is not long since mine old eyes beheld her.'

'You!' said Murdoch, in astonishment — 'you, a chief among the Children of the Mist, and ventured so near your mortal foe?'

'Son of Diarmid, I did more,' replied the outlaw: 'I was in the hall of the castle, disguised as a harper from the wild shores of Skianach. My purpose was to have plunged my dirk in the body of the M'Aulay with the Bloody Hand, before whom our race trembles, and to have taken thereafter what fate God should send me. But I saw Annot Lyle even when my hand was on the hilt of my dagger. She touched her clairshach to a song of the Children of the Mist, which she had learned when her dwelling was amongst us. The woods in which we had dwelt pleasantly rustled their green leaves in the song, and our streams were there with the sound of all their waters. My hand forsook the dagger, the fountains of mine eyes were opened, and the hour of revenge passed away. And now, Son of Diarmid, have I not paid the ransom of my head?'

'Ay,' replied Murdoch, 'if your tale be true; but what proof can you assign for it?'

'Bear witness, heaven and earth,' exclaimed the outlaw, 'he already looks how he may slep over his word!'

'Not so,' replied Murdoch; 'every promise shall be kept to

you when I am assured you have told me the truth. But I must speak a few words with your companion in captivity.'

'Fair and false — ever fair and false,' muttered the prisoner, as he threw himself once more on the floor of his dungeon.

Meanwhile, Captain Dalgetty, who had attended to every word of this dialogue, was making his own remarks on it in private. 'What the *henker* can this sly fellow have to say to me? I have no child, either of my own, so far as I know, or of any other person, to tell him a tale about. But let him come on; he will have some manœuvring ere he turn the flank of the old soldier.'

Accordingly, as if he had stood pike in hand to defend a breach, he waited with caution, but without fear, the commencement of the attack.

'You are a citizen of the world, Captain Dalgetty,' said Murdoch Campbell, 'and cannot be ignorant of our old Scotch proverb, "giff-gaff," which goes through all nations and all services.'

'Then I should know something of it,' said Dalgetty; 'for, except the Turks, there are few powers in Europe whom I have not served; and I have sometimes thought of taking a turn either with Bethlen Gabor or with the Janizaries.'

'A man of your experience and unprejudiced ideas, then, will understand me at once,' said Murdoch, 'when I say, I mean that your freedom shall depend on your true and upright answer to a few trifling questions respecting the gentlemen you have left — their state of preparation, the number of their men and nature of their appointments, and as much as you chance to know about their plan of operations.'

'Just to satisfy your curiosity,' said Dalgetty, 'and without any farther purpose?'

'None in the world,' replied Murdoch. 'What interest should a poor devil like me take in their operations?'

'Make your interrogations, then,' said the Captain, 'and I will answer them *peremptorie*.'

'How many Irish may be on their march to join James Graham, the delinquent?'

'Probably ten thousand,' said Captain Dalgetty.

'Ten thousand!' replied Murdoch, angrily; 'we know that scarce two thousand landed at Ardnamurchan.'

'Then you know more about them than I do,' answered Captain Dalgetty, with great composure. 'I never saw them mustered yet, or even under arms.'

'And how many men of the clans may be expected?' demanded Murdoch.

'As many as they can make,' replied the Captain.

'You are answering from the purpose, sir,' said Murdoch; 'speak plainly, will there be five thousand men?'

'There and thereabouts,' answered Dalgetty.

'You are playing with your life, sir, if you trifle with me,' replied the catechist; 'one whistle of mine, and in less than ten minutes your head hangs on the drawbridge.'

'But to speak candidly, Mr. Murdoch,' replied the Captain, 'do you think it is a reasonable thing to ask me after the secrets of our army, and I engaged to serve for the whole campaign? If I taught you how to defeat Montrose, what becomes of my pay, arrears, and chance of booty?'

'I tell you,' said Campbell, 'that if you be stubborn, your campaign shall begin and end in a march to the block at the castle gate, which stands ready for such landlaufers; but if you answer my questions faithfully, I will receive you into my — into the service of M'Callum More.'

'Does the service afford good pay?' said Captain Dalgetty.

'He will double yours, if you will return to Montrose and act under his direction.'

'I wish I had seen you, sir, before taking on with him,' said Dalgetty, appearing to meditate.

'On the contrary, I can afford you more advantageous terms now,' said the Campbell; 'always supposing that you are faithful.'

'Faithful, that is, to you, and a traitor to Montrose,' answered the Captain.

'Faithful to the cause of religion and good order,' answered Murdoch, 'which sanctifies any deception you may employ to serve it.'

'And the Marquis of Argyle — should I incline to enter his service, is he a kind master?' demanded Dalgetty.

'Never man kinder,' quoth Campbell.

'And bountiful to his officers?' pursued the Captain.

'The most open hand in Scotland,' replied Murdoch.

'True and faithful to his engagements?' continued Dalgetty.

'As honourable a nobleman as breathes,' said the clansman.

'I never heard so much good of him before,' said Dalgetty; 'you must know the Marquis well, or rather you must be the Marquis himself! Lord of Argyle,' he added, throwing himself suddenly on the disguised nobleman, 'I arrest you in the name

of King Charles as a traitor. If you venture to call for assistance I will wrench round your neck.'

The attack which Dalgetty made upon Argyle's person was so sudden and unexpected that he easily prostrated him on the floor of the dungeon and held him down with one hand, while his right, grasping the Marquis's throat, was ready to strangle him on the slightest attempt to call for assistance.

'Lord of Argyle,' he said, 'it is now my turn to lay down the terms of capitulation. If you list to show me the private way by which you entered the dungeon, you shall escape, on condition of being my *locum tenens*, as we said at the Marischal College, until your warder visits his prisoners. But if not, I will first strangle you — I learned the art from a Polonian heyduck who had been a slave in the Ottoman seraglio — and then seek out a mode of retreat.'

'Villain! you would not murder me for my kindness,' murmured Argyle.

'Not for your kindness, my lord,' replied Dalgetty: 'but, first, to teach your lordship the *jus gentium* towards cavaliers who come to you under safe-conduct; and secondly, to warn you of the danger of proposing dishonourable terms to any worthy soldado, in order to tempt him to become false to his standard during the term of his service.'

'Spare my life,' said Argyle, 'and I will do as you require.'

Dalgetty maintained his gripe upon the Marquis's throat, compressing it a little while he asked questions, and relaxing it so far as to give him the power of answering them.

'Where is the secret door into the dungeon?' he demanded.

'Hold up the lantern to the corner on your right hand, you will discern the iron which covers the spring,' replied the Marquis.

'So far so good. Where does the passage lead to?'

'To my private apartment behind the tapestry,' answered the prostrate nobleman.

'From thence how shall I reach the gateway?'

'Through the grand gallery, the ante-room, the lackeys' waiting hall, the grand guard-room ——'

'All crowded with soldiers, factionaries, and attendants! That will never do for me, my lord; have you no secret passage to the gate, as you have to your dungeons? I have seen such in Germany.'

'There is a passage through the chapel,' said the Marquis, 'opening from my apartment.'

'And what is the password at the gate?'

'"The sword of Levi,"' replied the Marquis; 'but if you will receive my pledge of honour, I will go with you, escort you through every guard, and set you at full liberty with a passport.'

'I might trust you, my lord, were your throat not already black with the grasp of my fingers; as it is, *Beso los manos a usted*, as the Spaniard says. Yet you may grant me a passport; are there writing materials in your apartment?'

'Surely; and blank passports ready to be signed. I will attend you there,' said the Marquis, 'instantly.'

'It were too much honour for the like of me,' said Dalgetty; 'your lordship shall remain under charge of mine honest friend Ranald MacEagh; therefore, prithee let me drag you within reach of his chain. Honest Ranald, you see how matters stand with us. I shall find the means, I doubt not, of setting you at freedom. Meantime, do as you see me do; clap your hand thus on the weasand of this high and mighty prince, under his ruff, and if he offer to struggle or cry out, fail not, my worthy Ranald, to squeeze doughtily, and if it be *ad deliquium*, Ranald, that is, till he swoon, there is no great matter, seeing he designed your gullet and mine to still harder usage.'

'If he offer at speech or struggle,' said Ranald, 'he dies by my hand.'

'That is right, Ranald, very spirited. A thoroughgoing friend that understands a hint is worth a million!'

Thus resigning the charge of the Marquis to his new confederate, Dalgetty pressed the spring, by which the secret door flew open, though so well were its hinges polished and oiled that it made not the slightest noise in revolving. The opposite side of the door was secured by very strong bolts and bars, beside which hung one or two keys, designed apparently to undo fetterlocks. A narrow staircase, ascending up through the thickness of the castle wall, landed, as the Marquis had truly informed him, behind the tapestry of his private apartment. Such communications were frequent in old feudal castles, as they gave the lord of the fortress, like a second Dionysius, the means of hearing the conversation of his prisoners, or, if he pleased, of visiting them in disguise, an experiment which had terminated so unpleasantly on the present occasion for Gillespie Grumach. Having examined previously whether there was any one in the apartment, and finding the coast clear, the Captain

entered, and hastily possessing himself of a blank passport, several of which lay on the table, and of writing materials, securing, at the same time, the Marquis's dagger and a silk cord from the hangings, he again descended into the cavern, where, listening a moment at the door, he could hear the half-stifled voice of the Marquis making great proffers to MacEagh, on condition he would suffer him to give an alarm.

'Not for a forest of deer — not for a thousand head of cattle,' answered the freebooter — 'not for all the lands that ever called a Son of Diarmid master, will I break the troth I have plighted to him of the iron garment!'

'He of the iron garment,' said Dalgetty, entering, 'is bounden unto you, MacEagh, and this noble lord shall be bounden also; but first he must fill up this passport with the names of Major Dugald Dalgetty and his guide, or he is like to have a passport to another world.'

The Marquis subscribed, and wrote, by the light of the dark lantern, as the soldier prescribed to him.

'And now, Ranald,' said Dalgetty, 'strip thy upper garment — thy plaid, I mean, Ranald — and in it will I muffle the M'Callum More, and make of him, for the time, a Child of the Mist. Nay, I must bring it over your head, my lord, so as to secure us against your mistimed clamour. So, now he is sufficiently muffled. Hold down your hands, or, by Heaven, I will stab you to the heart with your own dagger! Nay, you shall be bound with nothing less than silk, as your quality deserves. So, now he is secure till some one comes to relieve him. If he ordered us a late dinner, Ranald, he is like to be the sufferer; at what hour, my good Ranald, did the jailor usually appear?"

'Never till the sun was beneath the western wave,' said MacEagh.

'Then, my friend, we shall have three hours good,' said the cautious Captain. 'In the meantime, let us labour for your liberation.'

To examine Ranald's chain was the next occupation. It was undone by means of one of the keys which hung behind the private door, probably deposited there that the Marquis might, if he pleased, dismiss a prisoner, or remove him elsewhere, without the necessity of summoning the warden. The outlaw stretched his benumbed arms and bounded from the floor of the dungeon in all the ecstasy of recovered freedom.

'Take the livery-coat of that noble prisoner,' said Captain Dalgetty: 'put it on, and follow close at my heels.'

The outlaw obeyed. They ascended the private stair, having first secured the door behind them, and thus safely reached the apartment of the Marquis.[1]

[1] See Baronial Espionage. Note 5.

CHAPTER XIV

> This was the entry then, these stairs; but whither after?
> Yet he that's sure to perish on the land
> May quit the nicety of card and compass,
> And trust the open sea without a pilot
>
> *Tragedy of Brennovalt.*

'LOOK out for the private way through the chapel, Ranald,' said the Captain, 'while I give a hasty regard to these matters.'

Thus speaking, he seized with one hand a bundle of Argyle's most private papers, and with the other a purse of gold, both of which lay in a drawer of a rich cabinet which stood invitingly open. Neither did he neglect to possess himself of a sword and pistols, with powder-flask and balls, which hung in the apartment. 'Intelligence and booty,' said the veteran, as he pouched the spoils, 'each honourable cavalier should look to, the one on his general's behalf and the other on his own. This sword is an Andrew Ferrara, and the pistols better than mine own. But a fair exchange is no robbery. Soldados are not to be endangered, and endangered gratuitously, my Lord of Argyle. But soft, soft, Ranald; wise Man of the Mist, whither art thou bound?'

It was indeed full time to stop MacFagh's proceedings: for, not finding the private passage readily, and impatient, it would seem, of farther delay, he had caught down a sword and target, and was about to enter the great gallery, with the purpose, doubtless, of fighting his way through all opposition.

'Hold, while you live,' whispered Dalgetty, laying hold on him. 'We must lie perdue, if possible. So bar we this door, that it may be thought M'Callum More would be private; and now let me make a reconnoissance for the private passage.'

By looking behind the tapestry in various places, the Captain at length discovered a private door, and behind that a winding passage, terminated by another door, which doubtless entered the chapel. But what was his disagreeable surprise to hear,

on the other side of this second door, the sonorous voice of a divine in the act of preaching.

'This made the villain,' he said 'recommend this to us as a private passage. I am strongly tempted to return and cut his throat.'

He then opened very gently the door, which led into a latticed gallery used by the Marquis himself, the curtains of which were drawn, perhaps with the purpose of having it supposed that he was engaged in attendance upon divine worship, when, in fact, he was absent upon his secular affairs. There was no other person in the seat; for the family of th Marquis — such was the high state maintained in those days — sate during service in another gallery, placed somewhat lower than that of the great man himself. This being the case, Captain Dalgetty ventured to ensconce himself in the gallery, of which he carefully secured the door.

Never (although the expression be a bold one) was a sermon listened to with more impatience and less edification, on the part of one, at least, of the audience. The Captain heard 'sixteenthly,' 'seventeenthly,' 'eighteenthly,' and 'to conclude,' with a sort of feeling like protracted despair. But no man can lecture (for the service was called a lecture) for ever; and the discourse was at length closed, the clergyman not failing to make a profound bow towards the latticed gallery, little suspecting whom he honoured by that reverence. To judge from the haste with which they dispersed, the domestics of the Marquis were scarce more pleased with their late occupation than the anxious Captain Dalgetty; indeed, many of them being Highlandmen, had the excuse of not understanding a single word which the clergyman spoke, although they gave their attendance on his doctrine by the special order of M'Callum More, and would have done so had the preacher been a Turkish imaum.

But although the congregation dispersed thus rapidly, the divine remained behind in the chapel, and, walking up and down its Gothic precincts, seemed either to be meditating on what he had just been delivering or preparing a fresh discourse for the next opportunity. Bold as he was, Dalgetty hesitated what he ought to do. Time, however, pressed, and every moment increased the chance of their escape being discovered by the jailor visiting the dungeon perhaps before his wonted time, and discovering the exchange which had been made there. At length, whispering Ranald, who watched all his motions, to follow him and preserve his countenance, Captain Dalgetty,

with a very composed air, descended a flight of steps which led from the gallery into the body of the chapel. A less experienced adventurer would have endeavoured to pass the worthy clergyman rapidly, in hopes to escape unnoticed. But the Captain, who foresaw the manifest danger of failing in such an attempt, walked gravely to meet the divine upon his walk in the midst of the chancel, and, pulling off his cap, was about to pass him after a formal reverence. But what was his surprise to view in the preacher the very same person with whom he had dined in the castle of Ardenvohr! Yet he speedily recovered his composure; and, ere the clergyman could speak, was the first to address him. 'I could not,' he said, 'leave this mansion without bequeathing to you, my very reverend sir, my humble thanks for the homily with which you have this evening favoured us.'

'I did not observe, sir,' said the clergyman, 'that you were in the chapel.'

'It pleased the honourable Marquis,' said Dalgetty, modestly, 'to grace me with a seat in his own gallery.' The divine bowed low at this intimation, knowing that such an honour was only vouchsafed to persons of very high rank. 'It has been my fate, sir,' said the Captain, 'in the sort of wandering life which I have led, to have heard different preachers of different religions — as, for example, Lutheran, Evangelical, Reformed, Calvinistical, and so forth — but never have I listened to such a homily as yours.'

'Call it a lecture, worthy sir,' said the divine, 'such is the phrase of our church.'

'Lecture or homily,' said Dalgetty, 'it was, as the High Germans say, *ganz fortreflich*; and I could not leave this place without testifying unto you what inward emotions I have undergone during your edifying prelection; and how I am touched to the quick, that I should yesterday, during the refection, have seemed to infringe on the respect due to such a person as yourself.'

'Alas! my worthy sir,' said the clergyman, 'we meet in this world as in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, not knowing against whom we may chance to encounter. In truth, it is no matter of marvel if we sometimes jostle those to whom, if known, we would yield all respect. Surely, sir, I would rather have taken you for a profane malignant than for such a devout person as you prove, who reverences the great Master even in the meanest of His servants.'

[illegible] THE CLERGYMAN.
[illegible] R

'It is always my custom to do so, learned sir,' answered Dalgetty; 'for in the service of the immortal Gustavus — but I detain you from your meditations,' his desire to speak of the King of Sweden being for once overpowered by the necessity of his circumstances.

'By no means, my worthy sir,' said the clergyman. 'What was, I pray you, the order of that great prince, whose memory is so dear to every Protestant bosom?'

'Sir, the drums beat to prayers morning and evening as regularly as for parade; and if a soldier passed without saluting the chaplain, he had an hour's ride on the wooden mare for his pains. Sir, I wish you a very good evening; I am obliged to depart the castle under M'Callum More's passport.'

'Stay one instant, sir,' said the preacher; 'is there nothing I can do to testify my respect for the pupil of the great Gustavus, and so admirable a judge of preaching?'

'Nothing, sir,' said the Captain, 'but to show me the nearest way to the gate; and if you would have the kindness,' he added, with great effrontery, 'to let a servant bring my horse with him, the dark grey gelding — call him Gustavus, and he will prick up his ears — for I know not where the castle stables are situated, and my guide,' he added, looking at Ranald, 'speaks no English.'

'I hasten to accommodate you,' said the clergyman; 'your way lies through that cloistered passage.'

'Now, Heaven's blessing upon your vanity!' said the Captain to himself. 'I was afraid I would have had to march off without Gustavus.'

In fact, so effectually did the chaplain exert himself in behalf of so excellent a judge of composition, that, while Dalgetty was parleying with the sentinels at the drawbridge, showing his passport, and giving the watchword, a servant brought him his horse, ready saddled for the journey. In another place the Captain's sudden appearance at large after having been publicly sent to prison might have excited suspicion and inquiry; but the officers and domestics of the Marquis were accustomed to the mysterious policy of their master, and never supposed aught else than that he had been liberated and intrusted with some private commission by their master. In this belief, and having received the parole, they gave him free passage.

Dalgetty rode slowly through the town of Inverary, the

outlaw attending upon him like a foot-page at his horse's shoulder. As they passed the gibbet, the old man looked on the bodies and wrung his hands. The look and gesture were momentary, but expressive of indescribable anguish. Instantly recovering himself, Ranald, in passing, whispered somewhat to one of the females, who, like Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, seemed engaged in watching and mourning the victims of feudal injustice and cruelty. The woman started at his voice, but immediately collected herself, and returned for answer a slight inclination of the head.

Dalgetty continued his way out of the town, uncertain whether he should try to seize or hire a boat and cross the lake, or plunge into the woods, and there conceal himself from pursuit. In the former event he was liable to be instantly pursued by the galleys of the Marquis, which lay ready for sailing, their long yard-arms pointing to the wind, and what hope could he have in an ordinary Highland fishing-boat to escape from them? If he made the latter choice, his chance either of supporting or concealing himself in those waste and unknown wildernesses was in the highest degree precarious. The town lay now behind him, yet what hand to turn to for safety he was unable to determine, and began to be sensible that, in escaping from the dungeon at Inverary, desperate as the matter seemed, he had only accomplished the easiest part of a difficult task. If retaken, his fate was now certain; for the personal injury he had offered to a man so powerful and so vindictive could be atoned for only by instant death. While he pondered these distressing reflections, and looked around with a countenance which plainly expressed indecision, Ranald MacEagh suddenly asked him, 'which way he intended to journey?'

'And that, honest comrade,' answered Dalgetty, 'is precisely the question which I cannot answer you. Truly I begin to hold the opinion, Ranald, that we had better have stuck by the brown loaf and water-pitcher until Sir Duncan arrived, who, for his own honour, must have made some fight for me.'

'Saxon,' answered MacEagh, 'do not regret having exchanged the foul breath of yonder dungeon for the free air of heaven. Above all, repent not that you have served a Son of the Mist. Put yourself under my guidance, and I will warrant your safety with my head.'

'Can you guide me safe through these mountains, and back to the army of Montrose?' said Dalgetty.

'I can,' answered MacEagh; 'there lives not a man to whom the mountain passes, the caverns, the glens, the thickets, and the corries are known as they are to the Children of the Mist. While others crawl on the level ground, by the sides of lakes and streams, ours are the steep hollows of the inaccessible mountains, the birthplace of the desert springs. Not all the bloodhounds of Argyle can trace the fastnesses through which I can guide you.'

'Say'st thou so, honest Ranald?' replied Dalgetty; 'then have on with thee; for of a surety I shall never save the ship by my own pilotage.'

The outlaw accordingly led the way into the wood by which the castle is surrounded for several miles, walking with so much despatch as kept Gustavus at a round trot, and taking such a number of cross cuts and turns that Captain Dalgetty speedily lost all idea where he might be, and all knowledge of the points of the compass. At length the path, which had gradually become more difficult, altogether ended among thickets and underwood. The roaring of a torrent was heard in the neighbourhood; the ground became in some places broken, in others boggy, and everywhere unfit for riding.

'What the foul fiend,' said Dalgetty, 'is to be done here? I must part with Gustavus, I fear.'

'Take no care for your horse,' said the outlaw; 'he shall soon be restored to you.'

As he spoke, he whistled in a low tone, and a lad, half-dressed in tartan, half-naked, having only his own shaggy hair, tied with a thong of leather, to protect his head and face from sun and weather, lean, and half-starved in aspect, his wild grey eyes appearing to fill up ten times the proportion usually allotted to them in the human face, crept out, as a wild beast might have done, from a thicket of brambles and briars.

'Give your horse to the gillie,' said Ranald MacEagh; 'your life depends upon it.'

'Och! och!' exclaimed the despairing veteran. 'Eheu! as we used to say at Marischal College, must I leave Gustavus in such grooming?'

'Are you frantic, to lose time thus?' said his guide. 'Do we stand on friend's ground, that you should part with your horse as if he were your brother? I tell you, you shall have him again; but if you never saw the animal, is not life better than the best colt ever mare foaled?'

'And that is true too, mine honest friend,' sighed Dalgetty;

'yet if you knew but the value of Gustavus, and the things we two have done and suffered together. See, he turns back to look at me! Be kind to him, my good breechless friend, and I will requite you well.' So saying, and withal sniffling a little to swallow his grief, he turned from the heartrending spectacle in order to follow his guide.

To follow his guide was no easy matter, and soon required more agility than Captain Dalgetty could muster. The very first plunge after he had parted from his charger carried him, with little assistance from a few overhanging boughs or projecting roots of trees, eight foot sheer down into the course of a torrent, up which the Son of the Mist led the way. Huge stones, over which they scrambled; thickets of thorn and brambles, through which they had to drag themselves; rocks which were to be climbed on the one side with much labour and pain, for the purpose of an equally precarious descent upon the other; all these, and many such interruptions, were surmounted by the light-footed and half-naked mountaineer with an ease and velocity which excited the surprise and envy of Captain Dalgetty, who, encumbered by his head-piece, corslet, and other armour, not to mention his ponderous jack-boots, found himself at length so much exhausted by fatigue and the difficulties of the road that he sate down upon a stone in order to recover his breath, while he explained to Ranald MacEagh the difference betwixt travelling *expeditus* and *impeditus*, as these two military phrases were understood at Marischal College, Aberdeen. The sole answer of the mountaineer was to lay his hand on the soldier's arm and point backward in the direction of the wind. Dalgetty could spy nothing, for evening was closing fast and they were at the bottom of a dark ravine. But at length he could distinctly hear at a distance the solemn toll of a large bell.

'That,' said he, 'must be the alarm — the storm-clock, as the Germans call it.'

'It strikes the hour of your death,' answered Ranald, 'unless you can accompany me a little farther. For every toll of that bell a brave man has yielded up his soul.'

'Truly, Ranald, my trusty friend,' said Dalgetty, 'I will not deny that the case may be soon my own; for I am so forfoughten — being, as I explained to you, *impeditus*; for had I been *expeditus*, I mind not pedestrian exercise the flourish of a fife — that I think I had better ensconce myself in one of these bushes and even lie quiet there to abide what fortune God shall

send me. I entreat you, mine honest friend Ranald, to shift for yourself, and leave me to my fortune, as the Lion of the North, the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, my never-to-be-forgotten master — whom you must surely have heard of, Ranald, though you may have heard of no one else — said to Francis Albert, Duke of Saxe-Lauenburgh, when he was mortally wounded on the plains of Lutzen. Neither despair altogether of my safety, Ranald, seeing I have been in as great pinches as this in Germany; more especially, I remember me, that at the fatal battle of Nerling — after which I changed service — —'

'If you would save your father's son's breath to help his child out of trouble, instead of wasting it upon the tales of seamachies,' said Ranald, who now grew impatient of the Captain's loquacity, 'or if your feet could travel as fast as your tongue, you might yet lay your head on an unbloody pillow to-night.'

'Something there is like military skill in that,' replied the Captain, 'although wantonly and irreverently spoken to an officer of rank. But I hold it good to pardon such freedoms on a march, in respect of the Saturnalian license indulged in such cases to the troops of all nations. And now, resume thine office, friend Ranald, in respect I am well-breathed; or, to be more plain, *I præ, sequar*, as we used to say at Marischal College.'

Comprehending his meaning rather from his motions than his language, the Son of the Mist again led the way, with an unerring precision that looked like instinct, through a variety of ground the most difficult and broken that could well be imagined. Dragging along his ponderous boots, encumbered with thigh-pieces, gauntlets, corslet, and back-piece, not to mention the buff jerkin which he wore under all these arms, talking of his former exploits the whole way, though Ranald paid not the slightest attention to him, Captain Dalgetty contrived to follow his guide a considerable space farther, when the deep-mouthed baying of a hound was heard coming down the wind, as if opening on the scent of its prey.

'Black hound,' said Ranald, 'whose throat never boded good to a Child of the Mist, ill fortune to her who littered thee! hast thou already found our trace? But thou art too late, swart hound of darkness, and the deer has gained the herd.'

So saying, he whistled very softly, and was answered in a

tone equally low from the top of a pass, up which they had for some time been ascending. Mending their pace, they reached the top, where the moon, which had now risen bright and clear, showed to Dalgetty a party of ten or twelve Highlanders, and about as many women and children, by whom Ranald MacEagh was received with such transports of joy as made his companion easily sensible that those by whom he was surrounded must of course be Children of the Mist. The place which they occupied well suited their name and habits. It was a beetling crag, round which winded a very narrow and broken footpath, commanded in various places by the position which they held.

Ranald spoke anxiously and hastily to the children of his tribe, and the men came one by one to shake hands with Dalgetty, while the women, clamorous in their gratitude, pressed round to kiss even the hem of his garment.

'They plight their faith to you,' said Ranald MacEagh, 'for requital of the good deed you have done to the tribe this day.'

'Enough said, Ranald,' answered the soldier — 'enough said. Tell them I love not this shaking of hands — it confuses ranks and degrees in military service; and as to kissing of gauntlets, puldrons, and the like, I remember that the immortal Gustavus, as he rode through the streets of Nuremberg, being thus worshipped by the populace - being doubtless far more worthy of it than a poor though honourable cavalier like myself did say unto them, in the way of rebuke, "If you idolise me thus like a god, who shall assure you that the vengeance of Heaven will not soon prove me to be a mortal?" And so here, I suppose, you intend to make a stand against your followers, Ranald - *roto a Dios*, as the Spaniard says! A very pretty position, as pretty a position for a small peloton of men as I have seen in my service; no enemy can come towards it by the road without being at the mercy of cannon and musket. But then, Ranald, my trusty comrade, you have no cannon, I dare to aver, and I do not see that any of these fellows have muskets either. So with what artillery you propose making good the pass, before you come to hand blows, truly, Ranald, it passeth my apprehension.'

'With the weapons and with the courage of our fathers,' said MacEagh; and made the Captain observe that the men of his party were armed with bows and arrows.

'Bows and arrows!' exclaimed Dalgetty; 'ha! ha! ha!

have we Robin Hood and Little John back again? Bows and arrows! why, the sight has not been seen in civilised war for a hundred years. Bows and arrows! and why not weavers' beams, as in the days of Goliah? Ah! that Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket should live to see men fight with bows and arrows! The immortal Gustavus would never have believed it, nor Wallenstein, nor Butler, nor old Tilly. Well, Ranald, a cat can have but its claws; since bows and arrows are the word, e'en let us make the best of it. Only, as I do not understand the scope and range of such old-fashioned artillery, you must make the best disposition you can out of your own head; for *my* taking the command, whilk I would have gladly done had you been to fight with any Christian weapons, is out of the question when you are to combat like quivered Numidians. I will, however, play my part with my pistols in the approaching melley, in respect my carabine unhappily remains at Gustavus's saddle. My service and thanks to you,' he continued, addressing a mountaineer who offered him a bow; 'Dugald Dalgetty may say of himself, as he learned at Marischal College —

> Non eget Mauris jaculis, neque arcu,
> Nec venenatis gravida sagittis,
> Fusce, pharetra;

whilk is to say ——'

Ranald MacEagh a second time imposed silence on the talkative commander as before, by pulling his sleeve and pointing down the pass. The bay of the bloodhound was now approaching nearer and nearer, and they could hear the voices of several persons who accompanied the animal, and hallooed to each other as they dispersed occasionally, either in the hurry of their advance or in order to search more accurately the thickets as they came along. They were obviously drawing nearer and nearer every moment. MacEagh, in the meantime, proposed to Captain Dalgetty to disencumber himself of his armour, and gave him to understand that the women should transport it to a place of safety.

'I crave your pardon, sir,' said Dalgetty, 'such is not the rule of our foreign service; in respect I remember the regiment of Finland cuirassiers reprimanded, and their kettle-drums taken from them, by the immortal Gustavus, because they had assumed the permission to march without their corslets, and to leave them with the baggage. Neither did they strike kettle-drums again at the head of that famous regiment until they behaved themselves so notably at the field of Leipsic; a lesson

whilk is not to be forgotten, any more than that exclamation of the immortal Gustavus, "Now shall I know if my officers love me, by their putting on their armour; since, if my officers are slain, who shall lead my soldiers into victory?" Nevertheless, friend Ranald, this is without prejudice to my being rid of these somewhat heavy boots, providing I can obtain any other succedaneum: for I presume not to say that my bare soles are fortified so as to endure the flints and thorns, as seems to be the case with your followers.'

To rid the Captain of his cumbrous greaves and case his feet in a pair of brogues made out of deerskin, which a Highlander stripped off for his accommodation, was the work of a minute, and Dalgetty found himself much lightened by the exchange. He was in the act of recommending to Ranald MacEagh to send two or three of his followers a little lower to reconnoitre the pass, and, at the same time, somewhat to extend his front, placing two detached archers at each flank by way of posts of observation, when the near cry of the hound apprised them that the pursuers were at the bottom of the pass. All was then dead silence; for, loquacious as he was on other occasions, Captain Dalgetty knew well the necessity of an ambush keeping itself under covert.

The moon gleamed on the broken pathway and on the projecting cliffs of rock round which it winded, its light intercepted here and there by the branches of bushes and dwarf trees, which, finding nourishment in the crevices of the rocks, in some places overshadowed the brow and ledge of the precipice. Below, a thick copsewood lay in deep and dark shadow, somewhat resembling the billows of a half-seen ocean. From the bosom of that darkness, and close to the bottom of the precipice, the hound was heard at intervals baying fearfully, sounds which were redoubled by the echoes of the woods and rocks around. At intervals these sunk into deep silence, interrupted only by the plashing noise of a small runnel of water, which partly fell from the rock, partly found a more silent passage to the bottom along its projecting surface. Voices of men were also heard in stifled converse below: it seemed as if the pursuers had not discovered the narrow path which led to the top of the rock, or that, having discovered it, the peril of the ascent, joined to the imperfect light and the uncertainty whether it might not be defended, made them hesitate to attempt it.

At length a shadowy figure was seen, which raised itself up

from the abyss of darkness below, and, emerging into the pale moonlight, began cautiously and slowly to ascend the rocky path. The outline was so distinctly marked that Captain Dalgetty could discover not only the person of a Highlander, but the long gun which he carried in his hand, and the plume of feathers which decorated his bonnet. '*Tausend teufen!* that I should say so, and so like to be near my latter end!' ejaculated the Captain, but under his breath, 'what will become of us now they have brought musketry to encounter our archers?'

But just as the pursuer had attained a projecting piece of rock about half-way up the ascent, and, pausing, made a signal for those who were still at the bottom to follow him, an arrow whistled from the bow of one of the Children of the Mist, and transfixed him with so fatal a wound that, without a single effort to save himself, he lost his balance and fell headlong from the cliff on which he stood into the darkness below. The crash of the boughs which received him, and the heavy sound of his fall from thence to the ground, was followed by a cry of horror and surprise which burst from his followers. The Children of the Mist, encouraged in proportion to the alarm this first success had caused among the pursuers, echoed back the clamour with a loud and shrill yell of exultation, and, showing themselves on the brow of the precipice, with wild cries and vindictive gestures, endeavoured to impress on their enemies a sense at once of their courage, their numbers, and their state of defence. Even Captain Dalgetty's military prudence did not prevent his rising up and calling out to Ranald, more loud than prudence warranted, '*Caracco*, comrade, as the Spaniard says! The long bow for ever! In my poor apprehension now, were you to order a file to advance and take position ——'

'The Sassenach!' cried a voice from beneath; 'mark the Sassenach sidier! I see the glitter of his breastplate.' At the same time three muskets were discharged; and while one ball rattled against the corslet of proof, to the strength of which our valiant Captain had been more than once indebted for his life, another penetrated the armour which covered the front of his left thigh, and stretched him on the ground. Ranald instantly seized him in his arms and bore him back from the edge of the precipice, while he dolefully ejaculated, 'I always told the immortal Gustavus, Wallenstein, Tilly, and other men of the sword, that, in my poor mind, taslets ought to be made musket proof.'

With two or three earnest words in Gaelic, MacEagh commended the wounded man to the charge of the females, who were in the rear of his little party, and was then about to return to the contest. But Dalgetty detained him, grasping a firm hold of his plaid. — 'I know not how this matter may end, but I request you will inform Montrose that I died like a follower of the immortal Gustavus; and I pray you, take heed how you quit your present strength, even for the purpose of pursuing the enemy, if you gain any advantage — and and ——'

Here Dalgetty's breath and eyesight began to fail him through loss of blood, and MacEagh, availing himself of this circumstance, extricated from his grasp the end of his own mantle and substituted that of a female, by which the Captain held stoutly, thereby securing, as he conceived, the outlaw's attention to the military instructions which he continued to pour forth while he had any breath to utter them, though they became gradually more and more incoherent. — 'And, comrade, you will be sure to keep your musketeers in advance of your stand of pikes, Lochaber axes, and two-handed swords. Stand fast, dragoons, on the left flank! Where was I? Ay, and, Ranal , if ye be minded to retreat, leave some lighted matches burning on the branches of the trees; it shows as if they were lined with shot. But I forget, ye have no matchlocks nor habergeons, only bows and arrows — bows and arrows! ha! ha! ha!'

Here the Captain sunk back in an exhausted condition, altogether unable to resist the sense of the ludicrous which, as a modern man-at-arms, he connected with the idea of these ancient weapons of war. It was a long time ere he recovered his senses; and, in the meantime, we leave him in the care of the Daughters of the Mist; nurses as kind and attentive in reality as they were wild and uncouth in outward appearance.

CHAPTER XV

But if no faithless action stain
  Thy true and constant word,
I 'll make thee famous by my pen,
  And glorious by my sword.

I 'll serve thee in such noble ways
  As ne'er were known before;
I 'll deck and crown thy head with bays,
  And love thee more and more.

MONTROSE'S *Lines.*

WE must now leave, with whatever regret, the valiant Captain Dalgetty to recover of his wounds or otherwise as fate shall determine, in order briefly to trace the military operations of Montrose, worthy as they are of a more important page and a better historian. By the assistance of the Chieftains whom we have commemorated, and more especially by the junction of the Murrays, Stewarts, and other clans of Athole, which were peculiarly zealous in the royal cause, he soon assembled an army of two or three thousand Highlanders, to whom he successfully united the Irish under Colkitto. This last leader, who, to the great embarrassment of Milton's commentators, is commemorated in one of that great poet's sonnets,[1] was properly named Alister or Alexander M'Donnell, by birth a Scottish Islesman, and related to the Earl of Antrim, to whose patronage he owed the command assigned him in the Irish troops. In many respects he merited this distinction. He was brave to intrepidity, and almost to insensibility, very strong and active in person, completely master of his weapons, and always ready to show the example in the extremity of danger. To counterbalance these good qualities, it must be recorded that he was inexperienced in military tactics, and of a jealous and presumptuous disposition, which often lost to Montrose the fruits of Colkitto's gallantry. Yet such is the predominance of outward personal qualities in the

[1] See Milton on the Scotch. Note 6.

eyes of a wild people, that the feats of strength and courage shown by this champion seem to have made a stronger impression upon the minds of the Highlanders than the military skill and chivalrous spirit of the great Marquis of Montrose. Numerous traditions are still preserved in the Highland glens concerning Alister M'Donnell, though the name of Montrose is rarely mentioned among them.

The point upon which Montrose finally assembled his little army was in Strath-Earn, on the verge of the Highlands of Perthshire, so as to menace the principal town of that county.

His enemies were not unprepared for his reception. Argyle, at the head of his Highlanders, was dogging the steps of the Irish from the west to the east, and by force, fear, or influence had collected an army nearly sufficient to have given battle to that under Montrose. The Lowlands were also prepared, for reasons which we assigned at the beginning of this tale. A body of six thousand infantry and six or seven thousand cavalry, which profanely assumed the title of God's army, had been hastily assembled from the shires of Fife, Angus, Perth, Stirling, and the neighbouring counties. A much less force in former times, nay, even in the preceding reign, would have been sufficient to have secured the Lowlands against a more formidable descent of Highlanders than those united under Montrose; but times had changed strangely within the last half-century. Before that period the Lowlanders were as constantly engaged in war as the mountaineers, and were incomparably better disciplined and armed. The favourite Scottish order of battle somewhat resembled the Macedonian phalanx. Their infantry formed a compact body, armed with long spears, impenetrable even to the men-at-arms of the age, though well mounted and arrayed in complete proof. It may easily be conceived, therefore, that their ranks could not be broken by the disorderly charge of Highland infantry armed for close combat only with swords, and ill furnished with missile weapons, and having no artillery whatever.

This habit of fight was in a great measure changed by the introduction of muskets into the Scottish Lowland service, which, not being as yet combined with the bayonet, was a formidable weapon at a distance, but gave no assurance against the enemy who rushed on to close quarters. The pike, indeed, was not wholly disused in the Scottish army; but it was no longer the favourite weapon, nor was it relied upon as formerly

by those in whose hands it was placed; insomuch that Daniel Lupton, a tactician of the day, has written a book expressly upon the superiority of the musket. This change commenced as early as the wars of Gustavus Adolphus, whose marches were made with such rapidity that the pike was very soon thrown aside in his army and exchanged for firearms. A circumstance which necessarily accompanied this change, as well as the establishment of standing armies, whereby war became a trade, was the introduction of a laborious and complicated system of discipline, combining a variety of words of command with corresponding operations and manœuvres, the neglect of any one of which was sure to throw the whole into confusion. War, therefore, as practised among most nations of Europe, had assumed much more than formerly the character of a profession or mystery, to which previous practice and experience were indispensable requisites. Such was the natural consequence of standing armies, which had almost everywhere, and particularly in the long German wars, superseded what may be called the natural discipline of the feudal militia.

The Scottish Lowland militia, therefore, laboured under a double disadvantage when opposed to Highlanders. They were divested of the spear, a weapon which, in the hands of their ancestors, had so often repelled the impetuous assaults of the mountaineer; and they were subjected to a new and complicated species of discipline, well adapted, perhaps, to the use of regular troops, who could be rendered completely masters of it, but tending only to confuse the ranks of citizen soldiers, by whom it was rarely practised, and imperfectly understood. So much has been done in our own time in bringing back tactics to their first principles, and in getting rid of the pedantry of war, that it is easy for us to estimate the disadvantages under which a half-trained militia laboured, who were taught to consider success as depending upon their exercising with precision a system of tactics which they probably only so far comprehended as to find out when they were wrong, but without the power of getting right again. Neither can it be denied that, in the material points of military habits and warlike spirit, the Lowlanders of the 17th century had sunk far beneath their Highland countrymen.

From the earliest period down to the Union of the Crowns, the whole kingdom of Scotland, Lowlands as well as Highlands, had been the constant scene of war, foreign and domestic; and there was probably scarce one of its hardy inhabitants, between

the age of sixteen and sixty, who was not as willing in point of fact as he was literally bound in law to assume arms at the first call of his liege lord or of a royal proclamation. The law remained the same in 1645 as a hundred years before, but the race of those subjected to it had been bred up under very different feelings. They had sat in quiet under their vine and under their fig-tree, and a call to battle involved a change of life as new as it was disagreeable. Such of them, also, who lived near unto the Highlands were in continual and disadvantageous contact with the restless inhabitants of those mountains, by whom their cattle were driven off, their dwellings plundered, and their persons insulted, and who had acquired over them that sort of superiority arising from a constant system of aggression. The Lowlanders who lay more remote, and out of reach of these depredations, were influenced by the exaggerated reports circulated concerning the Highlanders, whom, as totally differing in laws, language, and dress, they were induced to regard as a nation of savages, equally void of fear and of humanity. These various prepossessions, joined to the less warlike habits of the Lowlanders, and their imperfect knowledge of the new and complicated system of discipline for which they had exchanged their natural mode of fighting, placed them at great disadvantage when opposed to the Highlander in the field of battle. The mountaineers, on the contrary, with the arms and courage of their fathers, possessed also their simple and natural system of tactics, and bore down with the fullest confidence upon an enemy to whom anything they had been taught of discipline was, like Saul's armour upon David, a hinderance rather than a help, 'because they had not proved it.'

It was with such disadvantages on the one side, and such advantages on the other to counterbalance the difference of superior numbers and the presence of artillery and cavalry, that Montrose encountered the army of Lord Elcho upon the field of Tippermuir. The Presbyterian clergy had not been wanting in their efforts to rouse the spirit of their followers; and one of them, who harangued the troops on the very day of battle, hesitated not to say that, if ever God spoke by his mouth, he promised them, in His name, that day a great and assured victory. The cavalry and artillery were also reckoned sure warrants of success, as the novelty of their attack had upon former occasions been very discouraging to the Highlanders. The place of meeting was an open heath, and the ground

afforded little advantage to either party, except that it allowed the horse of the Covenanters to act with effect.

A battle upon which so much depended was never more easily decided. The lowland cavalry made a show of charging; but, whether thrown into disorder by the fire of musketry, or deterred by a disaffection to the service said to have prevailed among the gentlemen, they made no impression on the Highlanders whatever, and recoiled in disorder from ranks which had neither bayonets nor pikes to protect them. Montrose saw and instantly availed himself of this advantage. He ordered his whole army to charge, which they performed with the wild and desperate valour peculiar to mountaineers. One officer of the Covenanters alone, trained in the Italian wars, made a desperate defence upon the right wing. In every other point their line was penetrated at the first onset; and this advantage once obtained, the Lowlanders were utterly unable to contend at close quarters with their more agile and athletic enemies. Many were slain on the field, and such a number in the pursuit that above one-third of the Covenanters were reported to have fallen; in which number, however, must be computed a great many fat burgesses who broke their wind in the flight, and thus died without stroke of sword.[1]

The victors obtained possession of Perth, and obtained considerable sums of money, as well as ample supplies of arms and ammunition. But those advantages were to be balanced against an almost insurmountable inconvenience that uniformly attended a Highland army. The clans could be in no respect induced to consider themselves as regular soldiers, or to act as such. Even so late as the year 1745-46, when the Chevalier Charles Edward, by way of making an example, caused a soldier to be shot for desertion, the Highlanders, who composed his army, were affected as much by indignation as by fear. They could not conceive any principle of justice upon which a man's life could be taken for merely going home when it did not suit him to remain longer with the army. Such had been the uniform practice of their fathers. When a battle was over the campaign was, in their opinion, ended: if it was lost, they sought safety in their mountains; if won, they returned there to secure their booty. At other times they had their cattle to look after, and their harvests to sow or reap, without which their families would have perished for want. In either case, there was an end of their services for the time; and though

[1] See Baillie's *Letters*. Note 7.

they were easily enough recalled by the prospect of fresh adventures and more plunder, yet the opportunity of success was, in the meantime, lost, and could not afterwards be recovered. This circumstance serves to show, even if history had not made us acquainted with the same fact, that the Highlanders had never been accustomed to make war with the view of permanent conquest, but only with the hope of deriving temporary advantage, or deciding some immediate quarrel. It also explains the reason why Montrose, with all his splendid successes, never obtained any secure or permanent footing in the Lowlands, and why even those Lowland noblemen and gentlemen who were inclined to the royal cause showed diffidence and reluctance to join an army of a character so desultory and irregular as might lead them at all times to apprehend that the Highlanders, securing themselves by a retreat to their mountains, would leave whatever Lowlanders might have joined them to the mercy of an offended and predominant enemy. The same consideration will also serve to account for the sudden marches which Montrose was obliged to undertake in order to recruit his army in the mountains, and for the rapid changes of fortune by which we often find him obliged to retreat from before those enemies over whom he had recently been victorious. If there should be any who read these tales for any further purpose than that of immediate amusement, they will find these remarks not unworthy of their recollection.

It was owing to such causes, the slackness of the Lowland loyalists and the temporary desertion of his Highland followers, that Montrose found himself, even after the decisive victory of Tippermuir, in no condition to face the second army with which Argyle advanced upon him from the westward. In this emergency, supplying by velocity the want of strength, he moved suddenly from Perth to Dundee, and, being refused admission into that town, fell northward upon Aberdeen, where he expected to be joined by the Gordons and other loyalists. But the zeal of these gentlemen was, for the time, effectually bridled by a large body of Covenanters, commanded by the Lord Burleigh, and supposed to amount to three thousand men. These Montrose boldly attacked with half their number. The battle was fought under the walls of the city, and the resolute valour of Montrose's followers was again successful against every disadvantage.

But it was the fate of this great commander always to gain

the glory, but seldom to reap the fruits of victory. He had scarcely time to repose his small army in Aberdeen, ere he found, on the one hand, that the Gordons were likely to be deterred from joining him, by the reasons we have mentioned, with some others peculiar to their chief, the Marquis of Huntly; on the other hand, Argyle, whose forces had been augmented by those of several Lowland noblemen, advanced towards Montrose at the head of an army much larger than he had yet had to cope with. These troops moved, indeed, with slowness corresponding to the cautious character of their commander; but even that caution rendered Argyle's approach formidable, since his very advance implied that he was at the head of an army irresistibly superior.

There remained one mode of retreat open to Montrose, and he adopted it. He threw himself into the Highlands, where he could set pursuit at defiance, and where he was sure, in every glen, to recover those recruits who had left his standard to deposit their booty in their native fastnesses. It was thus that the singular character of the army which Montrose commanded, while, on the one hand, it rendered his victory in some degree nugatory, enabled him, on the other, under the most disadvantageous circumstances, to secure his retreat, recruit his forces, and render himself more formidable than ever to the enemy before whom he had lately been unable to make a stand.

On the present occasion he threw himself into Badenoch, and rapidly traversing that district, as well as the neighbouring country of Athole, he alarmed the Covenanters by successive attacks upon various unexpected points, and spread such general dismay that repeated orders were despatched by the Parliament to Argyle, their commander, to engage and disperse Montrose at all rates.

These commands from his superiors neither suited the haughty spirit nor the temporising and cautious policy of the nobleman to whom they were addressed. He paid, accordingly, no regard to them, but limited his efforts to intrigues among Montrose's few Lowland followers, many of whom had become disgusted with the prospect of a Highland campaign, which exposed their persons to intolerable fatigue and left their estates at the Covenanters' mercy. Accordingly, several of them left Montrose's camp at this period. He was joined, however, by a body of forces of more congenial spirit, and far better adapted to the situation in which he found himself. This reinforcement consisted of a large body of Highlanders,

whom Colkitto, despatched for that purpose, had levied in Argyleshire. Among the most distinguished was John of Moidart, called the Captain of Clan Ranald, with the Stewarts of Appin, the Clan Gregor, the Clan M'Nab, and other tribes of inferior distinction. By these means Montrose's army was so formidably increased that Argyle cared no longer to remain in the command of that opposed to him, but returned to Edinburgh, and there threw up his commission, under pretence that his army was not supplied with reinforcements and provisions in the manner in which they ought to have been. From thence the Marquis returned to Inverary, there, in full security, to govern his feudal vassals and patriarchal followers, and to repose himself in safety on the faith of the clan proverb already quoted — 'It is a far cry to Lochow.'

CHAPTER XVI

Such mountains steep, such craggy hills,
  His army on one side inclose:
The other side, great griesly gills
  Did fence with fenny mire and moss,

Which when the Earl understood,
  He council craved of captains all,
Who bade set forth with mournful mood
  And take such fortune as would fall.

Flodden Field, an Ancient Poem.

MONTROSE had now a splendid career in his view, provided he could obtain the consent of his gallant but desultory troops and their independent chieftains. The Lowlands lay open before him without an army adequate to check his career; for Argyle's followers had left the Covenanters' host when their master threw up his commission, and many other troops, tired of the war, had taken the same opportunity to disband themselves. By descending Strath Tay, therefore, one of the most convenient passes from the Highlands, Montrose had only to present himself in the Lowlands in order to rouse the slumbering spirit of chivalry and of loyalty which animated the gentlemen to the north of the Forth. The possession of these districts with or without a victory, would give him the command of a wealthy and fertile part of the kingdom, and would enable him, by regular pay, to place his army on a more permanent footing, to penetrate as far as the capital, perhaps from thence to the Border, where he deemed it possible to communicate with the yet unsubdued forces of King Charles.

Such was the plan of operations by which the truest glory was to be acquired and the most important success ensured for the royal cause. Accordingly it did not escape the ambitious and daring spirit of him whose services had already acquired him the title of the Great Marquis. But other motives actuated many of his followers, and perhaps were not with-

out their secret and unacknowledged influence upon his own feelings.

The Western Chiefs in Montrose's army, almost to a man, regarded the Marquis of Argyle as the most direct and proper object of hostilities. Almost all of them had felt his power; almost all, in withdrawing their fencible men from their own glens, left their families and property exposed to his vengeance; all, without exception, were desirous of diminishing his sovereignty; and most of them lay so near his territories that they might reasonably hope to be gratified by a share of his spoil. To these Chiefs the possession of Inverary and its castle was an event infinitely more important and desirable than the capture of Edinburgh. The latter event could only afford their clansmen a little transitory pay or plunder; the former ensured to the Chiefs themselves indemnity for the past and security for the future. Besides these personal reasons, the leaders, who favoured this opinion, plausibly urged that though, at his first descent into the Lowlands, Montrose might be superior to the enemy, yet every day's march he made from the hills must diminish his own forces and expose him to the accumulated superiority of any army which the Covenanters could collect from the Lowland levies and garrisons. On the other hand, by crushing Argyle effectually, he would not only permit his present western friends to bring out that proportion of their forces which they must otherwise leave at home for protection of their families; but, farther, he would draw to his standard several tribes already friendly to his cause, but who were prevented from joining him by fear of M'Callum More.

These arguments, as we have already hinted, found something responsive in Montrose's own bosom, not quite consonant with the general heroism of his character. The houses of Argyle and Montrose had been, in former times, repeatedly opposed to each other in war and in politics, and the superior advantages acquired by the former had made them the subject of envy and dislike to the neighbouring family, who, conscious of equal desert, had not been so richly rewarded. This was not all. The existing heads of these rival families had stood in the most marked opposition to each other since the commencement of the present troubles.

Montrose, conscious of the superiority of his talents, and of having rendered great service to the Covenanters at the beginning of the war, had expected from that party the supereminence of council and command which they judged it safer to entrust to

the more limited faculties and more extensive power of his rival Argyle. The having awarded this preference was an injury which Montrose never forgave the Covenanters; and he was still less likely to extend his pardon to Argyle, to whom he had been postponed. He was therefore stimulated by every feeling of hatred which could animate a fiery temper in a fierce age to seek for revenge upon the enemy of his house and person; and it is probable that these private motives operated not a little upon his mind when he found the principal part of his followers determined rather to undertake an expedition against the territories of Argyle than to take the far more decisive step of descending at once into the Lowlands.

Yet, whatever temptation Montrose found to carry into effect his attack upon Argyleshire, he could not easily bring himself to renounce the splendid achievement of a descent upon the Lowlands. He held more than one council with the principal Chiefs, combating, perhaps, his own secret inclination as well as theirs. He laid before them the extreme difficulty of marching even a Highland army from the eastward into Argyleshire, through passes scarcely practicable for shepherds and deer-stalkers, and over mountains with which even the clans lying nearest to them did not pretend to be thoroughly acquainted. These difficulties were greatly enhanced by the season of the year, which was now advancing towards December, when the mountain passes, in themselves so difficult, might be expected to be rendered utterly impassable by snow-storms. These objections neither satisfied nor silenced the Chiefs, who insisted upon their ancient mode of making war, by driving the cattle which, according to the Gaelic phrase, 'fed upon the grass of their enemy.' The council was dismissed late at night, and without coming to any decision, excepting that the Chiefs, who supported the opinion that Argyle should be invaded, promised to seek out among their followers those who might be most capable of undertaking the office of guides upon the expedition.

Montrose had retired to the cabin which served him for a tent, and stretched himself upon a bed of dry fern, the only place of repose which it afforded. But he courted sleep in vain, for the visions of ambition excluded those of Morpheus. In one moment he imagined himself displaying the royal banner from the reconquered Castle of Edinburgh, detaching assistance to a monarch whose crown depended upon his success, and receiving in requital all the advantages and preferments which could be heaped upon him whom a king delighteth to honour.

At another time this dream, splendid as it was, faded before the vision of gratified vengeance and personal triumph over a personal enemy. To surprise Argyle in his stronghold of Inverary; to crush in him at once the rival of his own house and the chief support of the Presbyterians; to show the Covenanters the difference between the preferred Argyle and the postponed Montrose, was a picture too flattering to feudal vengeance to be easily relinquished.

While he lay thus busied with contradictory thoughts and feelings, the soldier who stood sentinel upon his quarters announced to the Marquis that two persons desired to speak with his Excellency.

'Their names?' answered Montrose, 'and the cause of their urgency at such a late hour?'

On these points the sentinel, who was one of Colkitto's Irishmen, could afford his General little information; so that Montrose, who at such a period durst refuse access to no one, lest he might have been neglecting some important intelligence, gave directions, as a necessary precaution, to put the guard under arms, and then prepared to receive his untimely visitors. His groom of the chambers had scarce lighted a pair of torches, and Montrose himself had scarce risen from his couch, when two men entered, one wearing a Lowland dress of shamoy leather, worn almost to tatters; the other a tall upright old Highlander, of a complexion which might be termed iron-grey, wasted and worn by frost and tempest.

'What may be your commands with me, my friends?' said the Marquis, his hand almost unconsciously seeking the butt of one of his pistols; for the period, as well as the time of night, warranted suspicions which the good mien of his visitors was not by any means calculated to remove.

'I pray leave to congratulate you,' said the Lowlander, 'my most noble General and right honourable lord, upon the great battles which you have achieved since I had the fortune to be detached from you. It was a pretty affair that tuilzie at Tippermuir; nevertheless, if I might be permitted to counsel——'

'Before doing so,' said the Marquis, 'will you be pleased to let me know who is so kind as to favour me with his opinion?'

'Truly, my lord,' replied the man, 'I should have hoped that was unnecessary, seeing it is not so long since I took on in your service, under promise of a commission as Major, with half a dollar of daily pay and half a dollar of arrears; and I

am to trust your lordship has not forgotten my pay as well as my person?'

'My good friend, Major Dalgetty,' said Montrose, who by this time perfectly recollected his man, 'you must consider what important things have happened to put my friends' faces out of my memory, besides this imperfect light; but all conditions shall be kept. And what news from Argyleshire, my good Major? We have long given you up for lost, and I was now preparing to take the most signal vengeance upon the old fox who infringed the law of arms in your person.'

'Truly, my noble lord,' said Dalgetty, 'I have no desire that my return should put any stop to so proper and becoming an intention; verily it is in no shape in the Earl of Argyle's favour or mercy that I now stand before you, and I shall be no intercessor for him. But my escape is, under Heaven, and the excellent dexterity which, as an old and accomplished cavalier, I displayed in effecting the same — I say, under these, it is owing to the assistance of this old Highlander, whom I venture to recommend to your lordship's special favour, as the instrument of saving your lordship's to command, Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket.'

'A thankworthy service,' said the Marquis, gravely, 'which shall certainly be requited in the manner it deserves.'

'Kneel down, Ranald,' said Major Dalgetty, as we must now call him — 'kneel down and kiss his Excellency's hand.'

The prescribed form of acknowledgment not being according to the custom of Ranald's country, he contented himself with folding his arms on his bosom and making a low inclination of his head.

'This poor man, my lord,' said Major Dalgetty, continuing his speech with a dignified air of protection towards Ranald MacFagh, 'has strained all his slender means to defend my person from mine enemies, although having no better weapons of a missile sort than bows and arrows, whilk your lordship will hardly believe.'

'You will see a great many such weapons in my camp,' said Montrose, 'and we find them serviceable.'[1]

'Serviceable, my lord!' said Dalgetty; 'I trust your lordship will permit me to be surprised. Bows and arrows! I trust you will forgive my recommending the substitution of muskets, the first convenient opportunity. But besides defending me, this honest Highlander also was at the pains of curing

[1] See Bows and Arrows. Note 8.

me, in respect that I had got a touch of the wars in my retreat, which merits my best requital in this special introduction of him to your lordship's notice and protection.'

'What is your name, my friend?' said Montrose, turning to the Highlander.

'It may not be spoken,' answered the mountaineer.

'That is to say,' interpreted Major Dalgetty, 'he desires to have his name concealed, in respect he hath in former days taken a castle, slain certain children, and done other things whilk, as your good lordship knows, are often practised in war time, but excite no benevolence towards the perpetrator in the friends of those who sustain injury. I have known, in my military experience, many brave cavaliers put to death by the boors, simply for having used military license upon the country.'

'I understand,' said Montrose. 'This person is at feud with some of our followers? Let him retire to the court of guard, and we will think of the best mode of protecting him.'

'You hear, Ranald,' said Major Dalgetty, with an air of superiority, 'his Excellency wishes to hold privy council with me, you must go to the court of guard. He does not know where that is, poor fellow! he is a young soldier for so old a man; I will put him under the charge of a sentinel, and return to your lordship incontinent.' He did so, and returned accordingly.

Montrose's first inquiry respected the embassy to Inverary; and he listened with attention to Dalgetty's reply, notwithstanding the prolixity of the Major's narrative. It required an effort from the Marquis to maintain his attention; but no one better knew that, where information is to be derived from the report of such agents as Dalgetty, it can only be obtained by suffering them to tell their story in their own way. Accordingly the Marquis's patience was at length rewarded. Among other spoils which the Captain thought himself at liberty to take was a packet of Argyle's private papers. These he consigned to the hands of his General; a humour of accounting, however, which went no farther, for I do not understand that he made any mention of the purse of gold which he had appropriated at the same time that he made seizure of the papers aforesaid. Snatching a torch from the wall, Montrose was in an instant deeply engaged in the perusal of these documents, in which it is probable he found something to animate his personal resentment against his rival Argyle.

'Does he not fear me?' said he; 'then he shall feel me. Will he fire my castle of Mugdock? Inverary shall raise the first smoke. O for a guide through the skirts of Strath Fillan!'

Whatever might be Dalgetty's personal conceit, he understood his business sufficiently to guess at Montrose's meaning. He instantly interrupted his own prolix narration of the skirmish which had taken place, and the wound he had received in his retreat, and began to speak to the point which he saw interested his General.

'If,' said he, 'your Excellency wishes to make an infall into Argyleshire, this poor man, Ranald, of whom I told you, together with his children and companions, know every pass into that land, both leading from the east and from the north.'

'Indeed!' said Montrose; 'what reason have you to believe their knowledge so extensive?'

'So please your Excellency,' answered Dalgetty, 'during the weeks that I remained with them for cure of my wound, they were repeatedly obliged to shift their quarters, in respect of Argyle's repeated attempts to repossess himself of the person of an officer who was honoured with your Excellency's confidence; so that I had occasion to admire the singular dexterity and knowledge of the face of the country with which they alternately achieved their retreat and their advance; and when, at length, I was able to repair to your Excellency's standard, this honest simple creature, Ranald MacEagh, guided me by paths which my steed Gustavus — which your lordship may remember — trode with perfect safety, so that I said to myself that, where guides, spies, or intelligencers were required in a Highland campaign in that western country, more expert persons than he and his attendants could not possibly be desired.'

'And can you answer for this man's fidelity?' said Montrose; 'what is his name and condition?'

'He is an outlaw and robber by profession, something also of a homicide or murderer,' answered Dalgetty; 'and by name called Ranald MacEagh, whilk signifies, Ranald the Son of the Mist.'

'I should remember something of that name,' said Montrose, pausing. 'Did not these Children of the Mist perpetrate some act of cruelty upon the M'Aulays?'

Major Dalgetty mentioned the circumstance of the murder

of the forester, and Montrose's active memory at once recalled all the circumstances of the feud.

'It is most unlucky,' said Montrose, 'this inexpiable quarrel between these men and the M'Aulays. Allan has borne himself bravely in these wars, and possesses, by the wild mystery of his behaviour and language, so much influence over the minds of his countrymen that the consequences of disobliging him might be serious. At the same time, these men being so capable of rendering useful service, and being, as you say, Major Dalgetty, perfectly trustworthy ——'

'I will pledge my pay and arrears, my horse and arms, my head and neck, upon their fidelity,' said the Major; 'and your Excellency knows that a soldado could say no more for his own father.'

'True,' said Montrose; 'but as this is a matter of particular moment, I would willingly know the grounds of so positive an assurance.'

'Concisely then, my lord,' said the Major, 'not only did they disdain to profit by a handsome reward which Argyle did me the honour to place upon this poor head of mine, and not only did they abstain from pillaging my personal property, whilk was to an amount that would have tempted regular soldiers in any service of Europe; and not only did they restore me my horse, whilk your Excellency knows to be of value, but I could not prevail on them to accept one stiver, doit, or maravedi for the trouble and expenses of my sick-bed. They actually refused my coined money when freely offered — a tale seldom to be told in a Christian land.'

'I admit,' said Montrose, after a moment's reflection, 'that their conduct towards you is good evidence of their fidelity; but how to secure against the breaking out of this feud?' He paused, and then suddenly added, 'I had forgot I have supped, while you, Major, have been travelling by moonlight.'

He called to his attendants to fetch a stoup of wine and some refreshments. Major Dalgetty, who had the appetite of a convalescent returned from Highland quarters, needed not any pressing to partake of what was set before him, but proceeded to despatch his food with such alacrity that the Marquis, filling a cup of wine and drinking to his health, could not help remarking that, coarse as the provisions of his camp were, he was afraid Major Dalgetty had fared much worse during his excursion into Argyleshire.

'Your Excellency may take your corporal oath upon that,'

said the worthy Major, speaking with his mouth full; 'for Argyle's bread and water are yet stale and mouldy in my recollection, and though they did their best, yet the viands that the Children of the Mist procured for me, poor helpless creatures as they were, were so unrefreshful to my body that, when inclosed in my armour, whilk I was fain to leave behind me for expedition's sake, I rattled therein like the shrivelled kernel in a nut that hath been kept on to a second Hallowe'en.'

'You must take the due means to repair these losses, Major Dalgetty.'

'In troth,' answered the soldier, 'I shall hardly be able to compass that, unless my arrears are to be exchanged for present pay; for I protest to your Excellency that the three stone weight which I have lost were simply raised upon the regular accountings of the States of Holland.'

'In that case,' said the Marquis, 'you are only reduced to good marching order. As for the pay, let us once have victory victory, Major, and your wishes, and all our wishes, shall be amply fulfilled. Meantime, help yourself to another cup of wine.'

'To your Excellency's health,' said the Major, filling a cup to the brim, to show the zeal with which he drank the toast, 'and victory over all our enemies, and particularly over Argyle! I hope to twitch another handful from his beard myself. I have had one pluck at it already.'

'Very true,' answered Montrose; 'but to return to these Men of the Mist. You understand, Dalgetty, that their presence here, and the purpose for which we employ them, is a secret between you and me?'

Delighted, as Montrose had anticipated, with this mark of his General's confidence, the Major laid his hand upon his nose and nodded intelligence.

'How many may there be of Ranald's followers?' continued the Marquis.

'They are reduced, so far as I know, to some eight or ten men,' answered Major Dalgetty, 'and a few women and children.'

'Where are they now?' demanded Montrose.

'In a valley at three miles' distance,' answered the soldier, 'awaiting your Excellency's command; I judged it not fit to bring them to your leaguer without your Excellency's orders.'

'You judged very well,' said Montrose; 'it would be proper that they remain where they are, or seek some more distant

place of refuge. I will send them money, though it is a scarce article with me at present.'

'It is quite unnecessary,' said Major Dalgetty; 'your Excellency has only to hint that the M'Aulays are going in that direction, and my friends of the Mist will instantly make *ode face* and go to the right about.'

'That were scarce courteous,' said the Marquis. 'Better send them a few dollars to purchase them some cattle for the support of the women and children.'

'They know how to come by their cattle at a far cheaper rate,' said the Major; 'but let it be as your Excellency wills.'

'Let Ranald MacEagh,' said Montrose, 'select one or two of his followers, men whom he can trust, and who are capable of keeping their own secret and ours; these, with their chief for scout-master-general, shall serve for our guides. Let them be at my tent to-morrow at daybreak, and see, if possible, that they neither guess my purpose nor hold any communication with each other in private. This old man, has he any children?'

'They have been killed or hanged,' answered the Major, 'to the number of a round dozen, as I believe; but he hath left one grandchild, a smart and hopeful youth, whom I have noted to be never without a pebble in his plaid-nook, to fling at whatsoever might come in his way; being a symbol that, like David, who was accustomed to sling smooth stones taken from the brook, he may afterwards prove an adventurous warrior.'

'That boy, Major Dalgetty,' said the Marquis, 'I will have to attend upon my own person. I presume he will have sense enough to keep his name secret?'

'Your Excellency need not fear that,' answered Dalgetty; 'these Highland imps, from the moment they chip the shell ——'

'Well,' interrupted Montrose, 'that boy shall be pledge for the fidelity of his parent, and if he prove faithful the child's preferment shall be his reward. And now, Major Dalgetty, I will license your departure for the night; to-morrow you will introduce this MacEagh, under any name or character he may please to assume. I presume his profession has rendered him sufficiently expert in all sort of disguises; or we may admit John of Moidart into our schemes, who has sense, practicability, and intelligence, and will probably allow this man for a time to be disguised as one of his followers. For you, Major, my groom of the chambers will be your quartermaster for this evening.'

Major Dalgetty took his leave with a joyful heart, greatly elated with the reception he had met with, and much pleased with the personal manners of his new General, which, as he explained at great length to Ranald MacEagh, reminded him in many respects of the demeanour of the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and Bulwark of the Protestant Faith.

CHAPTER XVII

The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eyes suspended wait;
Stern famine guards the solitary coast,
And winter barricades the realms of frost.
He comes, nor want, nor cold, his course delay.

Vanity of Human Wishes.

BY break of day Montrose received in his cabin old Mac-Eagh, and questioned him long and particularly as to the means of approaching the country of Argyle. He made a note of his answers, which he compared with those of two of his followers, whom he introduced as the most prudent and experienced. He found them to correspond in all respects; but, still unsatisfied where precaution was so necessary, the Marquis compared the information he had received with that he was able to collect from the Chiefs who lay most near to the destined scene of invasion, and being in all respects satisfied of its accuracy, he resolved to proceed in full reliance upon it.

In one point Montrose changed his mind. Having judged it unfit to take the boy Kenneth into his own service, lest, in case of his birth being discovered, it should be resented as an offence by the numerous clans who entertained a feudal enmity to this devoted family, he requested the Major to take him in attendance upon himself; and as he accompanied this request with a handsome douceur, under pretence of clothing and equipping the lad, this change was agreeable to all parties.

It was about breakfast-time when Major Dalgetty, being dismissed by Montrose, went in quest of his old acquaintances, Lord Menteith and the M'Aulays, to whom he longed to communicate his own adventures, as well as to learn from them the particulars of the campaign. It may be imagined he was received with great glee by men to whom the late uniformity of their military life had rendered any change of society an interesting novelty. Allan M'Aulay alone seemed to recoil

from his former acquaintance, although, when challenged by his brother, he could render no other reason than a reluctance to be familiar with one who had been so lately in the company of Argyle and other enemies. Major Dalgetty was a little alarmed by this sort of instinctive consciousness which Allan seemed to entertain respecting the society he had been lately keeping; he was soon satisfied, however, that the perceptions of the seer in this particular were not infallible.

As Ranald MacEagh was to be placed under Major Dalgetty's protection and superintendence, it was necessary he should present him to those persons with whom he was most likely to associate. The dress of the old man had, in the meantime, been changed from the tartan of his clan to a sort of clothing peculiar to the men of the distant Isles, resembling a waistcoat with sleeves, and a petticoat, all made in one piece. This dress was laced from top to bottom in front, and bore some resemblance to that called polonaise, still worn by children in Scotland of the lower rank. The tartan hose and bonnet completed the dress, which old men of the last century remembered well to have seen worn by the distant Islesmen who came to the Earl of Mar's standard in the year 1715.

Major Dalgetty, keeping his eye on Allan as he spoke, introduced Ranald MacEagh under the fictitious name of Ranald MacGillihuron in Benbecula, who had escaped with him out of Argyle's prison. He recommended him as a person skilful in the arts of the harper and the seannachie, and by no means contemptible in the quality of a second-sighted person or seer. While making this exposition, Major Dalgetty stammered and hesitated in a way so unlike the usual glib forwardness of his manner, that he could not have failed to have given suspicion to Allan M'Aulay, had not that person's whole attention been engaged in steadily perusing the features of the person thus introduced to him. This steady gaze so much embarrassed Ranald MacEagh that his hand was beginning to sink down towards his dagger, in expectation of a hostile assault, when Allan, suddenly crossing the floor of the hut, extended his hand to him in the way of friendly greeting. They sat down side by side and conversed in a low mysterious tone of voice. Menteith and Angus M'Aulay were not surprised at this, for there prevailed among the Highlanders who pretended to the second sight a sort of freemasonry, which generally induced them, upon meeting, to hold communication with each other on the nature and extent of their visionary experiences.

'Does the sight come gloomy upon your spirits?' said Allan to his new acquaintance.

'As dark as the shadow upon the moon,' replied Ranald, 'when she is darkened in her mid-course in heaven, and prophets foretell of evil times.'

'Come hither,' said Allan — 'come more this way, I would converse with you apart; for men say that in your distant islands the sight is poured forth with more clearness and power than upon us who dwell near the Sassenach.'

While they were plunged into their mystic conference, the two English cavaliers entered the cabin in the highest possible spirits, and announced to Angus M'Aulay that orders had been issued that all should hold themselves in readiness for an immediate march to the westward. Having delivered themselves of their news with much glee, they paid their compliments to their old acquaintance, Major Dalgetty, whom they instantly recognised, and inquired after the health of his charger, Gustavus.

'I humbly thank you, gentlemen,' answered the soldier, 'Gustavus is well, though, like his master, somewhat barer on the ribs than when you offered to relieve me of him at Darnlinvarach; and let me assure you that, before you have made one or two of those marches which you seem to contemplate with so much satisfaction in prospect, you will leave, my good knights, some of your English beef, and probably an English horse or two, behind you.'

Both exclaimed that they cared very little what they found or what they left, provided the scene changed from dogging up and down Angus and Aberdeenshire in pursuit of an enemy who would neither fight nor run away.

'If such be the case,' said Angus M'Aulay, 'I must give orders to my followers, and make provision too for the safe conveyance of Annot Lyle; for an advance into M'Callum More's country will be a farther and fouler road than these pinks of Cumbrian knighthood are aware of.' So saying, he left the cabin.

'Annot Lyle!' repeated Dalgetty, 'is she following the campaign?'

'Surely,' replied Sir Giles Musgrave, his eye glancing slightly from Lord Menteith to Allan M'Aulay; 'we could neither march nor fight, advance nor retreat, without the influence of the Princess of Harps.'

'The Princess of Broadswords and Targets, I say,' answered his companion; 'for the Lady of Montrose herself could not

be more courteously waited upon: she has four Highland maidens and as many bare-legged gillies to wait upon her orders.'

'And what would you have, gentlemen?' said Allan, turning suddenly from the Highlander with whom he was in conversation; 'would you yourselves have left an innocent female, the companion of your infancy, to die by violence or perish by famine? There is not, by this time, a roof upon the habitation of my fathers; our crops have been destroyed, and our cattle have been driven; and you, gentlemen, have to bless God that, coming from a milder and more civilised country, you expose only your own lives in this remorseless war, without apprehension that your enemies will visit with their vengeance the defenceless pledges you may have left behind you.'

The Englishmen cordially agreed that they had the superiority in this respect; and the company, now dispersing, went each to his several charge or occupation.

Allan lingered a moment behind, still questioning the reluctant Ranald MacEagh upon a point in his supposed visions by which he was greatly perplexed. 'Repeatedly,' he said, 'have I had the sight of a Gael, who seemed to plunge his weapon into the body of Menteith — of that young nobleman in the scarlet laced cloak who has just now left the bothy. But by no effort, though I have gazed till my eyes were almost fixed in the sockets, can I discover the face of this Highlander, or even conjecture who he may be, although his person and air seem familiar to me.'[1]

'Have you reversed your own plaid,' said Ranald, 'according to the rule of the experienced seers in such case?'

'I have,' answered Allan, speaking low, and shuddering as if with internal agony.

'And in what guise did the phantom then appear to you?' said Ranald.

'With his plaid also reversed,' answered Allan, in the same low and convulsed tone.

'Then be assured,' said Ranald, 'that your own hand and none other will do the deed of which you have witnessed the shadow.'

'So has my anxious soul a hundred times surmised,' replied Allan. 'But it is impossible! Were I to read the record in the eternal book of fate, I would declare it impossible: we are bound by the ties of blood, and by a hundred ties more

[1] See Wraiths. Note 9.

intimate; we have stood side by side in battle, and our swords have reeked with the blood of the same enemies; it is IMPOSSIBLE I should harm him!'

'That you WILL do so,' answered Ranald, 'is certain, though the cause be hid in the darkness of futurity. You say,' he continued, suppressing his own emotions with difficulty, 'that side by side you have pursued your prey like bloodhounds; have you never seen bloodhounds turn their fangs against each other, and fight over the body of a throttled deer?'

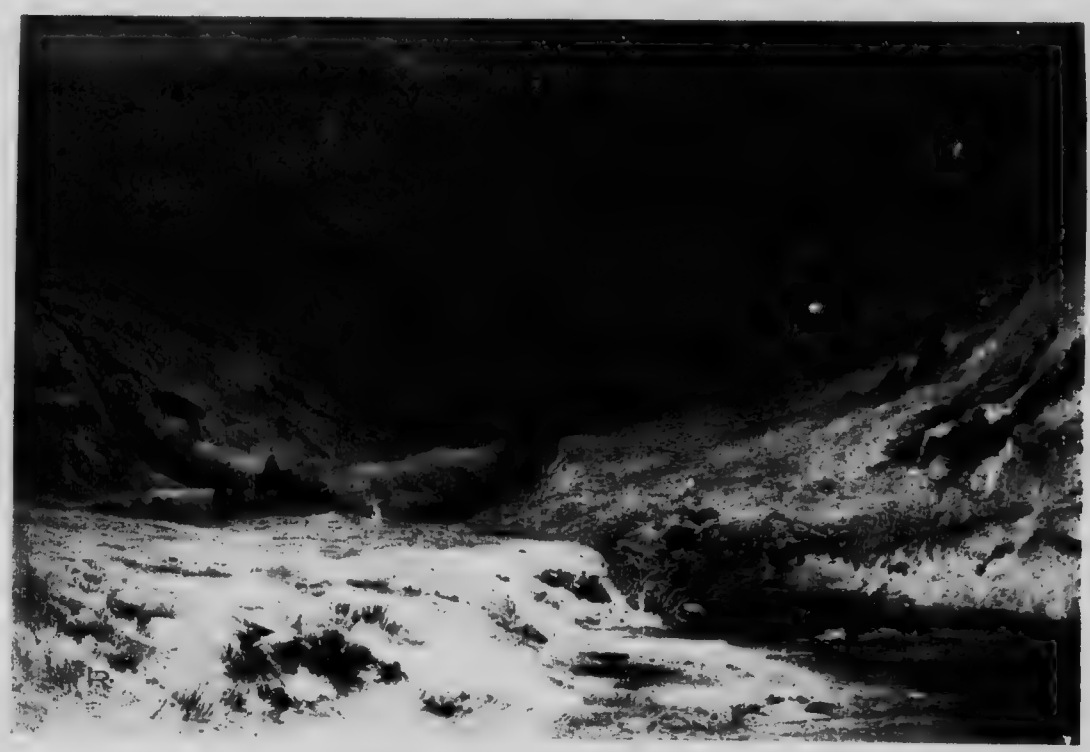
'It is false!' said M'Aulay, starting up, 'these are not the forebodings of fate, but the temptation of some evil spirit from the bottomless pit!' So saying, he strode out of the cabin.

'Thou hast it!' said the Son of the Mist, looking after him with an air of exultation; 'the barbed arrow is in thy side! Spirits of the slaughtered, rejoice! soon shall your murderers' swords be dyed in each other's blood.'

On the succeeding morning all was prepared, and Montrose advanced by rapid marches up the river Tay, and poured his desultory forces into the romantic vale around the lake of the same name, which lies at the head of that river. The inhabitants were Campbells, not indeed the vassals of Argyle, but of the allied and kindred house of Glenorchy, which now bears the name of Breadalbane. Being taken by surprise, they were totally unprepared for resistance, and were compelled to be passive witnesses of the ravages which took place among their flocks and herds. Advancing in this manner to the vale of Loch Dochart, and laying waste the country around him, Montrose reached the most difficult point of his enterprise.

To a modern army, even with the assistance of the good military road which now leads up by Teinedrum to the head of Loch Awe, the passage of these extensive wilds would seem a task of some difficulty. But at this period, and for long afterwards, there was no road or path whatsoever; and to add to the difficulty, the mountains were already covered with snow. It was a sublime scene to look up to them, piled in great masses, one upon another, the front rank of dazzling whiteness, while those which arose behind them caught a rosy tint from the setting of a clear wintry sun. Ben Cruachan, superior in magnitude, and seeming the very citadel of the genius of the region, rose high above the others, showing his glimmering and scathed peak to the distance of many miles.

The followers of Montrose were men not to be daunted by the sublime yet terrible prospect before them. Many of them



MONTROSE'S ARMY CROSSING THE MOUNTAINS.
From a painting by George Reid, R.S.A.

were of that ancient race of Highlanders who not only willingly made their couch in the snow, but considered it as effeminate luxury to use a snowball for a pillow. Plunder and revenge lay beyond the frozen mountains which they beheld, and they did not permit themselves to be daunted by the difficulty of traversing them. Montrose did not allow their spirits time to subside. He ordered the pipes to play in the van the ancient pibroch[1] entitled *Hoggil nam bo*, etc. (that is, 'We come through snow-drift to drive the prey'), the shrilling sounds of which had often struck the vales of the Lennox with terror. The troops advanced with the nimble alacrity of mountaineers, and were soon involved in the dangerous pass, through which Ranald acted as their guide, going before them with a select party to track out the way.

The power of man at no time appears more contemptible than when it is placed in contrast with scenes of natural terror and dignity. The victorious army of Montrose, whose exploits had struck terror into all Scotland, when ascending up this terrific pass, seemed a contemptible handful of stragglers, in the act of being devoured by the jaws of the mountain, which appeared ready to close upon them. Even Montrose half repented the boldness of his attempt, as he looked down, from the summit of the first eminence which he attained, upon the scattered condition of his small army. The difficulty of getting forward was so great that considerable gaps began to occur in the line of march, and the distance between the van, centre, and rear was each moment increased in a degree equally incommodious and dangerous. It was with great apprehension that Montrose looked upon every point of advantage which the hill afforded, in dread it might be found occupied by an enemy prepared for defence; and he often afterwards was heard to express his conviction that, had the passes of Strath-Fillan been defended by two hundred resolute men, not only would his progress have been effectually stopped, but his army must have been in danger of being totally cut off. Security, however, the bane of many a strong country and many a fortress, betrayed, on this occasion, the district of Argyle to his enemies. The invaders had only to contend with the natural difficulties of the path, and with the snow, which, fortunately, had not fallen in any great quantity. The army no sooner reached the summit of the ridge of hills dividing Argyleshire

[1] It is the family march of the M'Farlanes, a warlike and predatory clan, who inhabited the western banks of Loch Lomond. See *Waverley*, p. 478.

from the district of Breadalbane, than they rushed down upon the devoted vales beneath them with a fury sufficiently expressive of the motives which had dictated a movement so difficult and hazardous.

Montrose divided his army into three bodies, in order to produce a wider and more extensive terror, one of which was commanded by the Captain of Clan Ranald, one entrusted to the leading of Colkitto, and the third remained under his own direction. He was thus enabled to penetrate the country of Argyle at three different points. Resistance there was none. The flight of the shepherds from the hills had first announced in the peopled districts this formidable irruption, and wherever the clansmen were summoned out they were killed, disarmed, and dispersed by an enemy who had anticipated their motions. Major Dalgetty, who had been sent forward against Inverary with the few horse of the army that were fit for service, managed his matters so well that he had very nearly surprised Argyle, as he expressed it, *inter pocula;* and it was only a rapid flight by water which saved that Chief from death or captivity. But the punishment which Argyle himself escaped fell heavily upon his country and clan, and the ravages committed by Montrose on that devoted land, although too consistent with the genius of the country and times, have been repeatedly and justly quoted as a blot on his actions and character.

Argyle in the meantime had fled to Edinburgh to lay his complaints before the Convention of Estates. To meet the exigence of the moment, a considerable army was raised under General Baillie, a Presbyterian officer of skill and fidelity, with whom was joined in command the celebrated Sir John Urrie, a soldier of fortune like Dalgetty, who had already changed sides twice during the Civil War, and was destined to turn his coat a third time before it was ended. Argyle also, burning with indignation, proceeded to levy his own numerous forces, in order to avenge himself of his feudal enemy. He established his headquarters at Dunbarton, where he was soon joined by a considerable force, consisting chiefly of his own clansmen and dependants. Being there joined by Baillie and Urrie, with a very considerable army of regular forces, he prepared to march into Argyleshire and chastise the invader of his paternal territories.

But Montrose, while these two formidable armies were forming a junction, had been recalled from that ravaged country

by the approach of a third, collected in the north under the Earl of Seaforth, who, after some hesitation, having embraced the side of the Covenanters, had now, with the assistance of the veteran garrison of Inverness, formed a considerable army, with which he threatened Montrose from Inverness-shire. Enclosed in a wasted and unfriendly country, and menaced on each side by advancing enemies of superior force, it might have been supposed that Montrose's destruction was certain. But these were precisely the circumstances under which the active and enterprising genius of the Great Marquis was calculated to excite the wonder and admiration of his friends, the astonishment and terror of his enemies. As if by magic, he collected his scattered forces from the wasteful occupation in which they had been engaged; and scarce were they again united ere Argyle and his associate generals were informed that the Royalists, having suddenly disappeared from Argyleshire, had retreated northwards among the dusky and impenetrable mountains of Lochaber.

The sagacity of the generals opposed to Montrose immediately conjectured that it was the purpose of their active antagonist to fight with, and if possible to destroy, Seaforth ere they could come to his assistance. This occasioned a corresponding change in their operations. Leaving this chieftain to make the best defence he could, Urrie and Baillie again separated their forces from those of Argyle; and, having chiefly horse and Lowland troops under their command, they kept the southern side of the Grampian ridge, moving along eastward into the county of Angus, resolving from thence to proceed into Aberdeenshire, in order to intercept Montrose if he should attempt to escape in that direction.

Argyle, with his own levies and other troops, undertook to follow Montrose's march; so that, in case he should come to action either with Seaforth or with Baillie and Urrie, he might be placed between two fires by this third army, which, at a secure distance, was to hang upon his rear.

For this purpose, Argyle once more moved towards Inverary, having an opportunity, at every step, to deplore the severities which the hostile clans had exercised on his dependants and country. Whatever noble qualities the Highlanders possessed, and they had many, clemency in treating a hostile country was not of the number; but even the ravages of hostile troops combined to swell the number of Argyle's followers. It is still a Highland proverb, 'He whose house is burnt must become a

soldier'; and hundreds of the inhabitants of these unfortunate valleys had now no means of maintenance save by exercising upon others the severities they had themselves sustained, and no future prospect of happiness excepting in the gratification of revenge. His bands were, therefore, augmented by the very circumstances which had desolated his country, and Argyle soon found himself at the head of three thousand determined men, distinguished for activity and courage, and commanded by gentlemen of his own name, who yielded to none in those qualities. Under himself, he conferred the principal command upon Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr and another Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchenbreck,[1] an experienced and veteran soldier, whom he had recalled from the wars of Ireland for this purpose. The cold spirit of Argyle himself, however, clogged the military councils of his more intrepid assistants; and it was resolved, notwithstanding their increased force, to observe the same plan of operations, and to follow Montrose cautiously, in whatever direction he should march, avoiding an engagement until an opportunity should occur of falling upon his rear while he should be engaged with another enemy in front.

[1] This last character is historical.

CHAPTER XVIII

Piobracht au Donuil-dhu,
Piobrachet au Donuil,
Piobrachet agus s'breittach
Feacht an Innerlochy.

The war-tune of Donald the Black,
The war-tune of Black Donald,
The pipes and the banner
Are up in the rendezvous of Inverlochy.

THE military road connecting the chain of forts, as it is called, and running in the general line of the present Caledonian Canal, has now completely opened the great glen or chasm extending almost across the whole island, once doubtless filled by the sea, and still affording basins for that long line of lakes by means of which modern art has united the German and Atlantic Oceans. The paths or tracks by which the natives traversed this extensive valley were, in 1645-46, in the same situation as when they awaked the strain of an Irish engineer officer who had been employed in converting them into practicable military roads, and whose eulogium begins, and, for aught I know, ends, as follows:

> Had you seen but these roads before they were made,
> You would have held up your hands and bless'd General Wade.

But, bad as the ordinary paths were, Montrose avoided them and led his army, like a herd of wild deer, from mountain to mountain and from forest to forest, where his enemies could learn nothing of his motions, while he acquired the most perfect knowledge respecting theirs from the friendly clans of Cameron and M'Donnell, whose mountainous districts he now traversed. Strict orders had been given that Argyle's advance should be watched, and that all intelligence respecting his motions should be communicated instantly to the General himself.

It was a moonlight night, and Montrose, worn out by the fatigues of the day, was laid down to sleep in a miserable shieling. He had only slumbered two hours when some one touched his shoulder. He looked up, and, by the stately form and deep voice, easily recognised the Chief of the Camerons.

'I have news for you,' said that leader, 'which is worth while to arise and listen to.'

'M'Ilduy[1] can bring no other,' said Montrose, addressing the Chief by his patronymic title; 'are they good or bad?'

'As you may take them,' said the Chieftain.

'Are they certain?' demanded Montrose.

'Yes,' answered M'Ilduy, 'or another messenger should have brought them. Know that, tired with the task imposed upon me of accompanying that unhappy Dalgetty and his handful of horse, who detained me for hours on the march at the pace of a crippled badger, I made a stretch of four miles with six of my people in the direction of Inverlochy, and there met with Ian of Glenroy, who had been out for intelligence. Argyle is moving upon Inverlochy with three thousand chosen men, commanded by the flower of the Sons of Diarmid. These are my news; they are certain; it is for you to construe their purport.'

'Their purport must be good,' answered Montrose, readily and cheerfully; 'the voice of M'Ilduy is ever pleasant in the ears of Montrose, and most pleasant when it speaks of some brave enterprise at hand. What are our musters?'

He then called for light, and easily ascertained that a great part of his followers having, as usual, dispersed to secure their booty, he had not with him above twelve or fourteen hundred men.

'Not much above a third,' said Montrose, pausing, 'of Argyle's force, and Highlanders opposed to Highlanders. With the blessing of God upon the royal cause, I would not hesitate were the odds but one to two.'

'Then do not hesitate,' said Cameron: 'for when your trumpets shall sound to attack M'Callum More, not a man in these glens will remain deaf to the summons. Glengarry, Keppoch, I myself, would destroy, with fire and sword, the wretch who should remain behind under any pretence whatsoever. To-morrow or the next day shall be a day of battle to all who bear the name of M'Donnell or Cameron, whatever be the event.'

'It is gallantly said, my noble friend,' said Montrose, grasping

[1] Mhich-Connel Dhu, the descendant of Black Donald.

his hand, 'and I were worse than a coward did I not do justice to such followers by entertaining the most indubitable hopes of success. We will turn back on this M'Callum More, who follows us like a raven to devour the relics of our army, should we meet braver men who may be able to break its strength! Let the Chiefs and leaders be called together as quickly as possible; and you, who have brought us the first news of this joyful event – for such it shall be – you, M'Ilduy, shall bring it to a joyful issue by guiding us the best and nearest road against our enemy.'

'That will I willingly do,' said M'Ilduy; 'If I have shown you paths by which to retreat through these dusky wilds, with far more readiness will I teach you how to advance against your foe.'

A general bustle now prevailed, and the leaders were everywhere startled from the rude couches on which they had sought temporary repose.

'I never thought,' said Major Dalgetty, when summoned up from a handful of rugged heather roots, 'to have parted from a bed as hard as a stable broom with such bad will; but, indubitably, having but one man of military experience in his army, his Excellency the Marquis may be vindicated in putting him upon hard duty.'

So saying, he repaired to the council, where, notwithstanding his pedantry, Montrose seemed always to listen to him with considerable attention; partly because the Major really possessed military knowledge and experience, and often made suggestions which were found of advantage, and partly because it relieved the General from the necessity of deferring entirely to the opinion of the Highland Chiefs, and gave him additional ground for disputing it when it was not agreeable to his own. On the present occasion, Dalgetty joyfully acquiesced in the proposal of marching back and confronting Argyle, which he compared to the valiant resolution of the great Gustavus, who moved against the Duke of Bavaria, and enriched his troops by the plunder of that fertile country, although menaced from the northward by the large army which Wallenstein had assembled in Bohemia.

The Chiefs of Glengarry, Keppoch, and Lochiel, whose clans, equal in courage and military fame to any in the Highlands, lay within the neighbourhood of the scene of action, despatched the fiery cross through their vassals, to summon every one who could bear arms to meet the King's Lieutenant, and to join the

standards of their respective Chiefs as they marched towards Inverlochy. As the order was emphatically given, it was speedily and willingly obeyed. Their natural love of war, their zeal for the royal cause — for they viewed the King in the light of a chief whom his clansmen had deserted — as well as their implicit obedience to their own patriarch, drew into Montrose's army not only all in the neighbourhood who were able to bear arms, but some who, in age at least, might have been esteemed past the use of them. During the next day's march, which, being directed straight through the mountains of Lochaber, was unsuspected by the enemy, his forces were augmented by handfuls of men issuing from each glen, and ranging themselves under the banners of their respective Chiefs. This was a circumstance highly inspiriting to the rest of the army, who, by the time they approached the enemy, found their strength increased considerably more than one-fourth, as had been prophesied by the valiant leader of the Camerons.

While Montrose executed this counter-march, Argyle had, at the head of his gallant army, advanced up the southern side of Loch Eil, and reached the river Lochy, which combines that lake with Loch Lochy. The ancient Castle of Inverlochy, once, as it is said, a royal fortress, and still, although dismantled, a place of some strength and consideration, offered convenient headquarters, and there was ample room for Argyle's army to encamp around him in the valley, where the Lochy joins Loch Eil. Several barges had attended, loaded with provisions, so that they were in every respect as well accommodated as such an army wished or expected to be. Argyle, in council with Auchenbreck and Ardenvohr, expressed his full confidence that Montrose was now on the brink of destruction: that his troops must gradually diminish as he moved eastward through such uncouth paths; that if he went westward he must encounter Urrie and Baillie, if northward fall into the hands of Seaforth; or should he choose any halting-place, he would expose himself to be attacked by three armies at once.

'I cannot rejoice in the prospect, my lord,' said Auchenbreck, 'that James Graham will be crushed with little assistance of ours. He has left a heavy account in Argyleshire against him, and I long to reckon with him drop of blood for drop of blood. I love not the payment of such debts by third hands.'

'You are too scrupulous,' said Argyle; 'what signifies it by whose hands the blood of the Grahams is spilt? It is time

that of the Sons of Diarmid should cease to flow. What say you, Ardenvohr?'

'I say, my lord,' replied Sir Duncan, 'that I think Auchenbreck will be gratified, and will himself have a personal opportunity of settling accounts with Montrose for his depredations. Reports have reached our outposts that the Camerons are assembling their full strength on the skirts of Ben Nevis; this must be t join the advance of Montrose, and not to cover his retreat.'

'It must be some scheme of harassing and depredation,' said Argyle, 'devised by the inveterate malignity of M'Ilduy, which he terms loyalty. They can intend no more than an attack on our outposts or some annoyance to to-morrow's march.'

'I have sent out scouts,' said Sir Duncan, 'in every direction to procure intelligence; and we must soon hear whether they really do assemble any force, upon what point, or with what purpose.'

It was late ere any tidings were received; but when the moon had arisen, a considerable bustle in the camp, and a noise immediately after heard in the castle, announced the arrival of important intelligence. Of the scouts first dispersed by Ardenvohr, some had returned without being able to collect anything, save uncertain rumours concerning movements in the country of the Camerons. It seemed as if the skirts of Ben Nevis were sending forth those unaccountable and portentous sounds with which they sometimes announce the near approach of a storm. Others, whose zeal carried them farther upon their mission, were entrapped and slain or made prisoners by the inhabitants of the fastnesses into which they endeavoured to penetrate. At length, on the rapid advance of Montrose's army, his advanced guard and the outposts of Argyle became aware of each other's presence, and, after exchanging a few musket-shots and arrows, fell back to their respective main bodies, to convey intelligence and receive orders.

Sir Duncan Campbell and Auchenbreck instantly threw themselves on horseback, in order to visit the state of the outposts; and Argyle maintained his character of commander-in-chief with reputation, by making a respectable arrangement of his forces in the plain, as it was evident that they might now expect a night alarm, or an attack in the morning at farthest. Montrose had kept his forces so cautiously within the defiles of the mountain that no effort which Auchenbreck or Ardenvohr thought it prudent to attempt could ascertain his probable

strength. They were aware, however, that, at the utmost computation, it must be inferior to their own, and they returned to Argyle to inform him of the amount of their observations; but that nobleman refused to believe that Montrose could be in presence himself. He said, 'It was a madness of which even James Graham, in his height of presumptuous frenzy, was incapable; and he doubted not that their march was only impeded by their ancient enemies, Glencoe, Keppoch, and Glengarry; and perhaps M'Vourigh, with his M'Phersons, might have assembled a force, which he knew must be greatly inferior in numbers to his own, and whom, therefore, he doubted not to disperse by force or by terms of capitulation.'

The spirit of Argyle's followers was high, breathing vengeance for the disasters which their country had so lately undergone; and the night passed in anxious hopes that the morning might dawn upon their vengeance. The outposts of either army kept a careful watch, and the soldiers of Argyle slept in the order of battle which they were next day to occupy.

A pale dawn had scarce begun to tinge the tops of these immense mountains when the leaders of both armies prepared for the business of the day. It was the second of February, 1645-46. The clansmen of Argyle were arranged in two lines, not far from the angle between the river and the lake, and made an appearance equally resolute and formidable. Auchenbreck would willingly have commenced the battle by an attack on the outposts of the enemy, but Argyle, with more cautious policy, preferred receiving to making the onset. Signals were soon heard that they would not long wait for it in vain. The Campbells could distinguish, in the gorge of the mountains, the war-tunes of various clans as they advanced to the onset. That of the Camerons, which bears the ominous words, addressed to the wolves and ravens, 'Come to me, and I will give you flesh,' was loudly re-echoed from their native glens. In the language of the Highland bards, the war voice of Glengarry was not silent; and the gathering tunes of other tribes could be plainly distinguished, as they successively came up to the extremity of the passes from which they were to descend into the plain.

'You see,' said Argyle to his kinsmen, 'it is as I said, we have only to deal with our neighbours; James Graham has not ventured to show us his banner.'

At this moment there resounded from the gorge of the pass a lively flourish of trumpets, in that note with which it was the ancient Scottish fashion to salute the royal standard.

'You may hear, my lord, from yonder signal,' said Sir Duncan Campbell, 'that he who pretends to be the King's Lieutenant must be in person among these men.'

'And has probably horse with him,' said Auchenbreck, 'which I could not have anticipated. But shall we look pale for that, my lord, when we have foes to fight and wrongs to revenge?'

Argyle was silent, and looked upon his arm, which hung in a sash, owing to a fall which he had sustained in a preceding march.

'It is true,' interrupted Ardenvohr, eagerly, 'my Lord of Argyle, you are disabled from using either sword or pistol; you must retire on board the galleys. Your life is precious to us as a head; your hand cannot be useful to us as a soldier.'

'No,' said Argyle, pride contending with irresolution, 'it shall never be said that I fled before Montrose; if I cannot fight, I will at least die in the midst of my children.'

Several other principal Chiefs of the Campbells, with one voice, conjured and obtested their Chieftain to leave them for that day to the leading of Ardenvohr and Auchenbreck, and to behold the conflict from a distance and in safety. We dare not stigmatise Argyle with poltroonery; for, though his life was marked by no action of bravery, yet he behaved with so much composure and dignity in the final and closing scene that his conduct upon the present and similar occasions should be rather imputed to indecision than to want of courage. But when the small still voice within a man's own breast, which tells him that his life is of consequence to himself, is seconded by that of numbers around him, who assure him that it is of equal advantage to the public, history affords many examples of men more habitually daring than Argyle who have consulted self-preservation when the temptations to it were so powerfully increased.

'See him on board if you will, Sir Duncan,' said Auchenbreck to his kinsman; 'it must be my duty to prevent this spirit from spreading farther among us.'

So saying, he threw himself among the ranks, entreating, commanding, and conjuring the soldiers to remember their ancient fame and their present superiority, the wrongs they had to revenge if successful, and the fate they had to dread if vanquished; and imparting to every bosom a portion of the fire which glowed in his own. Slowly, meanwhile, and apparently with reluctance, Argyle suffered himself to be forced by his officious kinsmen to the verge of the lake, and was transported

on board of a galley, from the deck of which he surveyed with more safety than credit the scene which ensued.

Sir Duncan Campbell of Ardenvohr, notwithstanding the urgency of the occasion, stood with his eyes riveted on the boat which bore his Chieftain from the field of battle. There were feelings in his bosom which could not be expressed; for the character of a Chief was that of a father, and the heart of a clansman durst not dwell upon his failings with critical severity as upon those of other men. Argyle, too, harsh and severe to others, was generous and liberal among his kinsmen, and the noble heart of Ardenvohr was wrung with bitter anguish when he reflected to what interpretation his present conduct might subject him.

'It is better it should be so,' said he to himself, devouring his own emotion; 'but — of his line of a hundred sires, I know not one who would have retired while the banner of Diarmid waved in the wind in the face of its most inveterate foes!'

A loud shout now compelled him to turn, and to hasten with all despatch to his post, which was on the right flank of Argyle's little army.

The retreat of Argyle had not passed unobserved by his watchful enemy, who, occupying the superior ground, could mark every circumstance which passed below. The movement of three or four horsemen to the rear showed that those who retreated were men of rank.

'They are going,' said Dalgetty, 'to put their horses out of danger, like prudent cavaliers. Yonder goes Sir Duncan Campbell riding a brown bay gelding, which I had marked for my own second charger.'

'You are wrong, Major,' said Montrose, with a bitter smile; 'they are saving their precious Chief. Give the signal for assault instantly; send the word through the ranks. Gentlemen, noble Chiefs, Glengarry, Keppoch, M'Vourigh, upon them instantly! Ride to M'Ilduy, Major Dalgetty, and tell him to charge as he loves Lochaber; return and bring our handful of horse to my standard. They shall be placed with the Irish as a reserve.'

CHAPTER XIX

As meets a rock a thousand waves, so Inisfail met Lochlin.

OSSIAN.

THE trumpets and bagpipes, those clamorous harbingers of blood and death, at once united in the signal for onset, which was replied to by the cry of more than two thousand warriors, and the echoes of the mountain glens behind them. Divided into three bodies or columns, the Highland followers of Montrose poured from the defiles which had hitherto concealed them from their enemies, and rushed with the utmost determination upon the Campbells, who waited their charge with the greatest firmness. Behind these charging columns marched in line the Irish, under Colkitto, intented to form the reserve. With them was the royal standard and Montrose himself; and on the flanks were about fifty horse, under Dalgetty, which by wonderful exertions had been kept in some sort fit for service.

The right column of Royalists was led by Glengarry, the left by Lochiel, and the centre by the Earl of Menteith, who preferred fighting on foot in a Highland dress to remaining with the cavalry.

The Highlanders poured on with the proverbial fury of their country, firing their guns and discharging their arrows at a little distance from the enemy, who received the assault with the most determined gallantry. Better provided with musketry than their enemies, stationary also, and therefore taking the more decisive aim, the fire of Argyle's followers was more destructive than that which they sustained. The royal clans, perceiving this, rushed to close quarters, and succeeded on two points in throwing their enemies into disorder. With regular troops this must have achieved a victory; but here Highlanders were opposed to Highlanders, and the nature of the weapons, as well as the agility of those who wielded them, was equal on both sides.

Their strife was accordingly desperate; and the clash of the swords and axes, as they encountered each other or rung upon the targets, was mingled with the short, wild, animating shrieks with which Highlanders accompany the battle, the dance, or indeed violent exertion of any kind. Many of the foes opposed were personally acquainted, and sought to match themselves with each other from motives of hatred or a more generous emulation of valour. Neither party would retreat an inch, while the place of those who fell (and they fell fast on both sides) was eagerly supplied by others, who thronged to the front of danger. A steam, like that which arises from a seething cauldron, rose into the thin, cold, frosty air and hovered above the combatants.

So stood the fight on the right and the centre, with no immediate consequence except mutual wounds and death.

On the right of the Campbells, the Knight of Ardenvohr obtained some advantage, through his military skill and by strength of numbers. He had moved forward obliquely the extreme flank of his line at the instant the Royalists were about to close, so that they sustained a fire at once on front and in flank, and, despite the utmost efforts of their leader, were thrown into some confusion. At this instant Sir Duncan Campbell gave the word to charge, and thus unexpectedly made the attack at the very moment he seemed about to receive it. Such a change of circumstances is always discouraging, and often fatal. But the disorder was remedied by the advance of the Irish reserve, whose heavy and sustained fire compelled the Knight of Ardenvohr to forego his advantage and content himself with repulsing the enemy. The Marquis of Montrose, in the meanwhile, availing himself of some scattered birch trees, as well as of the smoke produced by the close fire of the Irish musketry, which concealed the operation, called upon Dalgetty to follow him with the horse, and wheeling round so as to gain the right flank and even the rear of the enemy, he commanded his six trumpets to sound the charge. The clang of the cavalry trumpets, and the noise of the galloping of the horse, produced an effect upon Argyle's right wing which no other sounds could have impressed them with. The mountaineers of that period had a superstitious dread of the war-horse, like that entertained by the Peruvians, and had many strange ideas respecting the manner in which that animal was trained to combat. When, therefore, they found their ranks unexpectedly broken, and that the objects of their greatest terror were suddenly in the midst

of them, the panic, in spite of Sir Duncan's attempts to stop it, became universal. Indeed, the figure of Major Dalgetty alone, sheathed in impenetrable armour, and making his horse caracole and bound, so as to give weight to every blow which he struck, would have been a novelty in itself sufficient to terrify those who had never seen anything more nearly resembling such a cavalier than a shelty waddling under a Highlander far bigger than itself. The repulsed Royalists returned to the charge; the Irish, keeping their ranks, maintained a fire equally close and destructive. There was no sustaining the fight longer. Argyle's followers began to break and fly, most towards the lake, the remainder in different directions. The defeat of the right wing, of itself decisive, was rendered irreparable by the death of Auchenbreck, who fell while endeavouring to restore order.

The Knight of Ardenvohr, with two or three hundred men, all gentlemen of descent and distinguished gallantry — for the Campbells are supposed to have had more gentlemen in their ranks than any of the Highland clans — endeavoured, with unavailing heroism, to cover the tumultuary retreat of the common file. Their resolution only proved fatal to themselves, as they were charged again and again by fresh adversaries, and forced to separate from each other, until at length their aim seemed only to be to purchase an honourable death by resisting to the very last.

'Good quarter, Sir Duncan,' called out Major Dalgetty, when he discovered his late host, with one or two others, defending himself against several Highlanders: and, to enforce his offer, he rode up to him with his sword uplifted. Sir Duncan's reply was the discharge of a reserved pistol, which took effect not on the person of the rider, but on that of his gallant horse, which, shot through the heart, fell dead under him. Ranald MacEagh, who was one of those who had been pressing Sir Duncan hard, took the opportunity to cut him down with his broadsword, as he turned from him in the act of firing the pistol.

Allan M'Aulay came up at this moment. They were, excepting Ranald, followers of his brother who were engaged on that part of the field. 'Villains!' he said, 'which of you has dared to do this, when it was my positive order that the Knight of Ardenvohr should be taken alive?'

Half a dozen of busy hands, which were emulously employed in plundering the fallen knight, whose arms and accoutrements

were of a magnificence befitting his quality, instantly forebore the occupation, and half the number of voices exculpated themselves by laying the blame on the Skye man, as they called Ranald MacEagh.

'Dog of an Islander!' said Allan, forgetting, in his wrath, their prophetic brotherhood, 'follow the chase and harm him no farther, unless you mean to die by my hand.' They were at this moment left almost alone; for Allan's threats had forced his own clan from the spot, and all around had pressed onwards toward the lake, carrying before them noise, terror, and confusion, and leaving behind only the dead and dying. The moment was tempting to MacEagh's vengeful spirit. 'That I should die by your hand, red as it is with the blood of my kindred,' said he, answering the threat of Allan in a tone as menacing as his own, 'is not more likely than that you should fall by mine.' With that, he struck at M'Aulay with such unexpected readiness that he had scarce time to intercept the blow with his target.

'Villain!' said Allan, in astonishment, 'what means this?'

'I am Ranald of the Mist!' answered the Islesman, repeating the blow; and with that word they engaged in close and furious conflict. It seemed to be decreed that in Allan M'Aulay had arisen the avenger of his mother's wrongs upon this wild tribe, as was proved by the issue of the present, as well as of former, combats. After exchanging a few blows, Ranald MacEagh was prostrated by a deep wound on the skull; and M'Aulay, setting his foot on him, was about to pass the broadsword through his body, when the point of the weapon was struck up by a third party, who suddenly interposed. This was no other than Major Dalgetty, who, stunned by the fall, and encumbered by the dead body of his horse, had now recovered his legs and his understanding. 'Hold up your sword,' said he to M'Aulay, 'and prejudice this person no farther, in respect that he is here in my safe-conduct, and in his Excellency's service; and in regard that no honourable cavalier is at liberty, by the law martial, to avenge his own private injuries *flagrante bello, multo majus flagrante prælio.*'

'Fool!' said Allan, 'stand aside, and dare not to come between the tiger and his prey!'

But, far from quitting his point, Dalgetty stept across the fallen body of MacEagh, and gave Allan to understand that, if he called himself a tiger, he was likely, at present, to find a lion in his path. There required no more than the gesture and

tone of defiance to turn the whole rage of the military seer against the person who was opposing the course of his vengeance, and blows were instantly exchanged without further ceremony.

The strife betwixt Allan and MacEagh had been unnoticed by the stragglers around, for the person of the latter was known to few of Montrose's followers; but the scuffle betwixt Dalgetty and him, both so well known, attracted instant attention, and fortunately, among others, that of Montrose himself, who had come for the purpose of gathering together his small body of horse and following the pursuit down Loch Ell. Aware of the fatal consequences of dissension in his little army, he pushed his horse up to the spot, and seeing MacEagh on the ground, and Dalgetty in the attitude of protecting him against M'Aulay, his quick apprehension instantly caught the cause of quarrel, and as instantly devised means to stop it. 'For shame,' he said, 'gentlemen cavaliers, brawling together in so glorious a field of victory! Are you mad? Or are you intoxicated with the glory which you have both this day gained?'

'It is not my fault, so please your Excellency,' said Dalgetty. 'I have been known a *bonus socius*, a *bon camarado*, in all the services of Europe; but he that touches a man under my safeguard ——'

'And he,' said Allan, speaking at the same time, 'who dares to bar the course of my just vengeance ——'

'For shame, gentlemen!' again repeated Montrose. 'I have other business for you both — business of deeper importance than any private quarrel, which you may easily find a more fitting time to settle. For you, Major Dalgetty, kneel down.'

'Kneel!' said Dalgetty; 'I have not learned to obey that word of command, saving when it is given from the pulpit. In the Swedish discipline, the front rank do indeed kneel, but only when the regiment is drawn up six file deep.'

'Nevertheless,' repeated Montrose, 'kneel down, in the name of King Charles and of his representative.'

When Dalgetty reluctantly obeyed, Montrose struck him lightly on the neck with the flat of his sword, saying, 'In reward of the gallant service of this day, and in the name and authority of our Sovereign, King Charles, I dub thee knight: be brave, loyal, and fortunate. And now, Sir Dugald Dalgetty, to your duty. Collect what horsemen you can, and pursue such of the enemy as are flying down the side of the lake. Do not disperse your force, nor venture too far; but take heed to pre-

vent their rallying, which very little exertion may do. Mount, then, Sir Dugald, and do your duty.'

'But what shall I mount?' said the new-made chevalier. 'Poor Gustavus sleeps in the bed of honour, like his immortal namesake! and I am made a knight, a rider[1] as the High Dutch have it, just when I have not a horse left to ride upon.'

'That shall not be said,' answered Montrose, dismounting; 'I make you a present of my own, which has been thought a good one; only, I pray you, remember the duty you discharge so well.'

With many acknowledgments, Sir Dugald mounted the steed so liberally bestowed upon him; and only beseeching his Excellency to remember that MacEagh was under his safe-conduct, immediately began to execute the orders assigned to him with great zeal and alacrity.

'And you, Allan M'Aulay,' said Montrose, addressing the Highlander, who, leaning his sword-point on the ground, had regarded the ceremony of his antagonist's knighthood with a sneer of sullen scorn - - 'you, who are superior to the ordinary men led by the paltry motives of plunder and pay and personal distinction, — you, whose deep knowledge renders you so valuable a counsellor — is it *you* whom I find striving with a man like Dalgetty, for the privilege of trampling the remains of life out of so contemptible an enemy as lies there? Come, my friend, I have other work for you. This victory, skilfully improved, shall win Seaforth to our party. It is not disloyalty, but despair of the good cause, that has induced him to take arms against us. These arms, in this moment of better augury, he may be brought to unite with ours. I shall send my gallant friend, Colonel Hay, to him, from this very field of battle, but he must be united in commission with a Highland gentleman of rank, befitting that of Seaforth, and of talents and of influence such as may make an impression upon him. You are not only in every respect the fittest for this most important mission, but, having no immediate command, your presence may be more easily spared than that of a Chief whose following is in the field. You know every pass and glen in the Highlands, as well as the manners and customs of every tribe. Go therefore to Hay, on the right wing; he has instructions, and expects you. You will find him with Glenmorrison's men; be his guide, his interpreter, and his colleague.'

Allan M'Aulay bent on the Marquis a dark and penetrating

[1] In German, as in Latin, the original meaning of the word *ritter*, corresponding to *eques*, is merely a horseman.

glance, as if to ascertain whether this sudden mission was not conferred for some latent and unexplained purpose. But Montrose, skilful in searching the motives of others, was an equal adept in concealing his own. He considered it as of the last consequence, in this moment of enthusiasm and exalted passion, to remove Allan from the camp for a few days, that he might provide, as his honour required, for the safety of those who had acted as his guides, when he trusted the seer's quarrel with Dalgetty might be easily made up. Allan, at parting, only recommended to the Marquis the care of Sir Duncan Campbell, whom Montrose instantly directed to be conveyed to a place of safety. He took the same precaution for MacEagh, committing the latter, however, to a party of the Irish, with directions that he should be taken care of, but that no Highlander, of any clan, should have access to him.

The Marquis then mounted a led horse, which was held by one of his attendants, and rode on to view the scene of his victory, which was more decisive than even his ardent hopes had anticipated. Of Argyle's gallant army of three thousand men, fully one-half fell in the battle or in the flight. They had been chiefly driven back upon that part of the plain where the river forms an angle with the lake, so that there was no free opening either for retreat or escape. Several hundreds were forced into the lake and drowned. Of the survivors, about one-half escaped by swimming the river, or by an early flight along the left bank of the lake. The remainder threw themselves into the old Castle of Inverlochy; but, being without either provisions or hopes of relief, they were obliged to surrender, on condition of being suffered to return to their homes in peace. Arms, ammunition, standards, and baggage, all became the prey of the conquerors.

This was the greatest disaster that ever befell the race of Diarmid, as the Campbells were called in the Highlands; it being generally remarked that they were as fortunate in the issue of their undertakings as they were sagacious in planning and courageous in executing them. Of the number slain, nearly five hundred were duinhéwassels, or gentlemen claiming descent from known and respected houses. And, in the opinion of many of the clan, even this heavy loss was exceeded by the disgrace arising from the inglorious conduct of their Chief, whose galley weighed anchor when the day was lost, and sailed down the lake with all the speed to which sails and oars could impel her.

CHAPTER XX

Faint the din of battle bray'd,
Distant down the hollow wind;
War and terror fled before,
Wounds and death remain'd behind.

PENROSE.

MONTROSE'S splendid success over his powerful rival was not attained without some loss, though not amounting to the tenth of what he inflicted. The obstinate valour of the Campbells cost the lives of many brave men of the opposite party; and more were wounded, the chief of whom was the brave young Earl of Menteith, who had commanded the centre. He was but slightly touched, however, and made rather a graceful than a terrible appearance when he presented to his General the standard of Argyle, which he had taken from the standard-bearer with his own hand, and slain him in single combat. Montrose dearly loved his noble kinman, in whom there was conspicuous a flash of the generous, romantic, disinterested chivalry of the old heroic times, entirely different from the sordid, calculating, and selfish character which the practice of entertaining mercenary troops had introduced into most parts of Europe, and of which degeneracy Scotland, which furnished soldiers of fortune for the service of almost every nation, had been contaminated with a more than usual share. Montrose, whose native spirit was congenial, although experience had taught him how to avail himself of the motives of others, used to Menteith neither the language of praise nor of promise, but clasped him to his bosom as he exclaimed, 'My gallant kinsman!' And by this burst of heartfelt applause was Menteith thrilled with a warmer glow of delight than if his praises had been recorded in a report of the action sent directly to the throne of his sovereign.

'Nothing,' he said, 'my lord, now seems to remain in which I can render any assistance; permit me to look after a duty of

humanity: the Knight of Ardenvohr, as I am told, is our prisoner, and severely wounded.'

'And well he deserves to be so,' said Sir Dugald Dalgetty, who came up to them at that moment with a prodigious addition of acquired importance, 'since he shot my good horse at the time that I was offering him honourable quarter, which, I must needs say, was done more like an ignorant Highland cateran, who has not sense enough to erect a sconce for the protection of his old hurley-house of a castle, than like a soldier of worth and quality.'

'Are we to condole with you, then,' said Lord Menteith, 'upon the loss of the famed Gustavus?'

'Even so, my lord,' answered the soldier, with a deep sigh. '*Diem clausit supremum*, as we said at the Marischal College of Aberdeen. Better so than be smothered like a cadger's pony in some flow-moss or snow-wreath, which was like to be his fate if this winter campaign lasted longer. But it has pleased his Excellency (making an inclination to Montrose) to supply his place by the gift of a noble steed, whom I have taken the freedom to name "Loyalty's Reward," in memory of this celebrated occasion.'

'I hope,' said the Marquis, 'you'll find Loyalty's Reward, since you call him so, practised in all the duties of the field; but I must just hint to you that, at this time, in Scotland, loyalty is more frequently rewarded with a halter than with a horse.'

'Ahem! your Excellency is pleased to be facetious. Loyalty's Reward is as perfect as Gustavus in all his exercises, and of a far finer figure. Marry! his social qualities are less cultivated, in respect he has kept till now inferior company.'

'Not meaning his Excellency the General, I hope,' said Lord Menteith, 'for shame, Sir Dugald!'

'I answered the Knight, gravely, 'I am incapable to [illegible] so utterly misbecoming. What I asseverate is, that his Excellency, having the same intercourse with his horse during his exercise that he hath with his soldiers when training them, may form and break either to every feat of war which he chooses to practise, and accordingly that this noble charger is admirably managed. But as it is the intercourse of private life that formeth the social character, so I do not apprehend that of the single soldier to be much polished by the conversation of the corporal or the sergeant, or that of Loyalty's Reward to have been much dulcified or ameliorated by the society of

his Excellency's grooms, who bestow more oaths and kicks and thumps than kindness or caresses upon the animals entrusted to their charge; whereby many a generous quadruped, rendered as it were misanthropic, manifests during the rest of his life a greater desire to kick and bite his master than to love and to honour him.'

'Spoke like an oracle,' said Montrose. 'Were there an academy for the education of horses to be annexed to the Marischal College of Aberdeen, Sir Dugald Dalgetty alone should fill the chair.'

'Because, being an ass,' said Menteith, aside to the General, 'there would be some distant relation between the professor and the students.'

'And now, with your Excellency's permission,' said the new-made Knight, 'I am going to pay my last visit to the remains of my old companion in arms.'

'Not with the purpose of going through the ceremonial of interment?' said the Marquis, who did not know how far Sir Dugald's enthusiasm might lead him. 'Consider, our brave fellows themselves will have but a hasty burial.'

'Your Excellency will pardon me,' said Dalgetty; 'my purpose is less romantic. I go to divide poor Gustavus's legacy with the fowls of heaven, leaving the flesh to them and reserving to myself his hide; which, in token of affectionate remembrance, I purpose to form into a cassock and trowsers, after the Tartar fashion, to be worn under my armour, in respect my nether garments are at present shamefully the worse of the wear. Alas! poor Gustavus, why didst thou not live at least one hour more, to have borne the honoured weight of knighthood upon thy loins!'

He was now turning away, when the Marquis called after him — 'As you are not likely to be anticipated in this act of kindness, Sir Dugald, to your old friend and companion, I trust,' said the Marquis, 'you will first assist me and our principal friends to discuss some of Argyle's good cheer, of which we have found abundance in the castle.'

'Most willingly, please your Excellency,' said Sir Dugald; 'as meat and mass never hinder work. Nor, indeed, am I afraid that the wolves or eagles will begin an onslaught on Gustavus to-night, in regard there is so much better cheer lying all around. But,' added he, 'as I am to meet two honourable knights of England, with others of the knightly degree in your lordship's army, I pray it may be explained to them that now, and in

future, I claim precedence over them all, in respect of my rank as a banneret, dubbed in a field of stricken battle.'

'The devil confound him!' said Montrose, speaking aside; 'he has contrived to set the kiln on fire as fast as I put it out. This is a point, Sir Dugald,' said he, gravely addressing him, 'which I shall reserve for his Majesty's express consideration; in my camp, all must be upon equality, like the Knights of the Round Table, and take their places as soldiers should, upon the principle of—first come, first served.'

'Then I shall take care,' said Menteith, apart to the Marquis, 'that Don Dugald is not first in place to-day. Sir Dugald,' added he, raising his voice, 'as you say your wardrobe is out of repair, had you not better go to the enemy's baggage yonder, over which there is a guard placed? I saw them take out an excellent buff suit, embroidered in front in silk and silver.'

'*Voto a Dios!* as the Spaniard says,' exclaimed the Major, 'and some beggarly gillie may get it while I stand prating here!'

The prospect of booty having at once driven out of his head both Gustavus and the provant, he set spurs to Loyalty's Reward and rode off through the field of battle.

'There goes the hound,' said Menteith, 'breaking the face and trampling on the body of many a better man than himself; and as eager on his sordid spoil as a vulture that stoops upon carrion. Yet this man the world calls a soldier; and you, my lord, select him as worthy of the honours of chivalry, if such they can at this day [illegible]ermed. You have made the collar of knighthood the decoration of a mere bloodhound.'

'What could I do?' said Montrose. 'I had no half-picked bones to give him, and bribed in some manner he must be: I cannot follow the chase alone. Besides, the dog has good qualities.'

'If nature has given him such,' said Menteith, 'habit has converted them into feelings of intense selfishness. He may be punctilious concerning his reputation, and brave in the execution of his duty, but it is only because without these qualities he cannot rise in the service; nay, his very benevolence is selfish: he may defend his companion while he can keep his feet, but the instant he is down, Sir Dugald will be as ready to ease him of his purse as he is to convert the skin of Gustavus into a buff jerkin.'

'And yet, if all this were true, cousin,' answered Montrose, 'there is something convenient in commanding a soldier upon

whose motives and springs of action you can calculate to a mathematical certainty. A fine spirit like yours, my cousin alive to a thousand sensations to which this man's is as impervious as his corslet — it is for such that thy friend must feel, while he gives his advice.' Then, suddenly changing his tone, he asked Menteith when he had seen Annot Lyle.

The young Earl coloured deeply, and answered, 'Not since last evening — excepting,' he added, with hesitation, 'for one moment, about half an hour before the battle began.'

'My dear Menteith,' said Montrose, very kindly, 'were you one of the gay Cavaliers of Whitehall, who are, in their way, as great self-seekers as our friend Dalgetty, should I need to plague you with inquiring into such an amourette as this? it would be an intrigue only to be laughed at. But this is the land of enchantment, where nets strong as steel are wrought out of ladies' tresses, and you are exactly the destined knight to be so fettered. This poor girl is exquisitely beautiful, and has talents formed to captivate your romantic temper. You cannot think of injuring her; you *cannot* think of marrying her!'

'My lord,' replied Menteith, 'you have repeatedly urged this jest, for so I trust it is meant, somewhat beyond bounds. Annot Lyle is of unknown birth, a captive, the daughter, probably, of some obscure outlaw, a dependant on the hospitality of the M'Aulays.'

'Do not be angry, Menteith,' said the Marquis, interrupting him. 'You love the classics, though not educated at Marischal College; and you may remember how many gallant hearts captive beauty has subdued: —

> Movit Ajacem, Telamone natum,
> Forma captivæ dominum Tecmessæ.

In a word, I am seriously anxious about this. I should not have time, perhaps,' he added, very gravely, 'to trouble you with my lectures on the subject, were your feelings and those of Annot alone interested; but you have a dangerous rival in Allan M'Aulay, and there is no knowing to what extent he may carry his resentment. It is my duty to tell you that the King's service may be much prejudiced by dissensions betwixt you.'

'My lord,' said Menteith, 'I know what you mean is kind and friendly. I hope you will be satisfied when I assure you that Allan M'Aulay and I have discussed this circumstance, and that I have explained to him that, as it is utterly remote from my character to entertain dishonourable views concerning

this unprotected female, so, on the other hand, the obscurity of her birth prevents my thinking of her upon other terms. I will not disguise from your lordship, what I have not disguised from M'Aulay, that, if Annot Lyle were born a lady, she should share my name and rank; as matters stand, it is impossible. This explanation, I trust, will satisfy your lordship, as it has satisfied a less reasonable person.'

Montrose shrugged his shoulders. 'And, like true champions in romance,' he said, 'you have agreed that you are both to worship the same mistress, as idolaters do the same image, and that neither shall extend his pretensions farther?'

'I did not go so far, my lord,' answered Menteith; 'I only said in the present circumstances — and there is no prospect of their being changed — I could, in duty to myself and family, stand in no relation to Annot Lyle but as that of friend or brother. But your lordship must excuse me; I have,' said he, looking at his arm, round which he had tied his handkerchief, 'a slight hurt to attend to.'

'A wound?' said Montrose, anxiously; 'let me see it. Alas!' he said, 'I should have heard nothing of this, had I not ventured to tent and sound another more secret and more rankling one. Menteith, I am sorry for you; I too have known — but what avails it to awake sorrows which have long slumbered!'

So saying, he shook hands with his noble kinsman and walked into the castle.

Annot Lyle, as was not unusual for females in the Highlands, was possessed of a slight degree of medical and even surgical skill. It may readily be believed that the profession of surgery or medicine, as a separate art, was unknown; and the few rude rules which they observed were entrusted to women or to the aged, whom constant casualties afforded too much opportunity of acquiring experience. The care and attention, accordingly, of Annot Lyle, her attendants, and others acting under her direction, had made her services extremely useful during this wild campaign. And most readily had these services been rendered to friend and foe, wherever they could be most useful. She was now in an apartment of the castle, anxiously superintending the preparation of vulnerary herbs, to be applied to the wounded; receiving reports from different females respecting those under their separate charge, and distributing what means she had for their relief, when Allan M'Aulay suddenly entered the apartment. She started, for

she had heard that he had left the camp upon a distant mission; and, however accustomed she was to the gloom of his countenance, it seemed at present to have even a darker shade than usual. He stood before her perfectly silent, and she felt the necessity of being the first to speak.

'I thought,' she said, with some effort, 'you had already set out.'

'My companion awaits me,' said Allan; 'I go instantly.'

Yet still he stood before her, and held her by the arm with a pressure which, though insufficient to give her pain, made her sensible of his great personal strength, his hand closing on her like the gripe of a manacle.

'Shall I take the harp?' she said, in a timid voice; 'is — is the shadow falling upon you?'

Instead of replying, he led her to the window of the apartment, which commanded a view of the field of the slain, with all its horrors. It was thick spread with dead and wounded, and the spoilers were busy tearing the clothes from the victims of war and feudal ambition, with as much indifference as if they had not been of the same species, and themselves exposed, perhaps to-morrow, to the same fate.

'Does the sight please you?' said M'Aulay.

'It is hideous!' said Annot, covering her eyes with her hands; 'how can you bid me look upon it?'

'You must be inured to it,' said he, 'if you remain with this destined host; you will soon have to search such a field for my brother's corpse — for Menteith's — for mine. But that will be a more indifferent task: you do not love me!'

'This is the first time you have taxed me with unkindness,' said Annot, weeping. 'You are my brother — my preserver — my protector, and can I then *but* love you? But your hour of darkness is approaching, let me fetch my harp ——'

'Remain,' said Allan, still holding her fast; 'be my visions from heaven or hell, or from the middle sphere of disembodied spirits, or be they, as the Saxons hold, but the delusions of an overheated fancy, they do not now influence me: I speak the language of the natural, of the visible world. You love not me, Annot; you love Menteith, by him you are beloved again: and Allan is no more to you than one of the corpses which encumber yonder heath.'

It cannot be supposed that this strange speech conveyed any new information to her who was thus addressed. No woman ever lived who could not in the same circumstances

have discerned long since the state of her lover's mind. But, by thus suddenly tearing off the veil, thin as it was, Allan prepared her to expect consequences violent in proportion to the enthusiasm of his character. She made an effort to repel the charge he had stated.

'You forget,' she said, 'your own worth and nobleness when you insult so very helpless a being, and one whom fate has thrown so totally into your power. You know who and what I am, and how impossible it is that Menteith or you can use language of affection to me, beyond that of friendship. You know from what unhappy race I have too probably derived my existence.'

'I will not believe it,' said Allan, impetuously; 'never flowed crystal drop from a polluted spring.'

'Yet the very doubt,' pleaded Annot, 'should make you forbear to use this language to me.'

'I know,' said M'Aulay, 'it places a bar between us, but I know also that it divides you not so inseparably from Menteith. Hear me, my beloved Annot! leave this scene of terrors and danger; go with me to Kintail. I will place you in the house of the noble Lady of Seaforth; or you shall be removed in safety to Icolmkill, where some women yet devote themselves to the worship of God after the custom of our ancestors.'

'You consider not what you ask of me,' replied Annot; 'to undertake such a journey under your sole guardianship were to show me less scrupulous than maiden ought. I will remain here, Allan — here under the protection of the noble Montrose; and when his motions next approach the Lowlands I will contrive some proper means to relieve you of one who has, she knows not how, become an object of dislike to you.'

Allan stood as if uncertain whether to give way to sympathy with her distress or to anger at her resistance.

'Annot,' he said, 'you know too well how little your words apply to my feelings towards you; but you avail yourself of your power, and you rejoice in my departure as removing a spy upon your intercourse with Menteith. But beware both of you,' he added, in a stern tone, 'for when was it ever heard that an injury was offered to Allan M'Aulay for which he exacted not tenfold vengeance?'

So saying, he pressed her arm forcibly, pulled the bonnet over his brows, and strode out of the apartment.

CHAPTER XXI

> After you 're gone,
> I grew acquainted with my heart, and search'd
> What stirr'd it so. Alas! I found it love.
> Yet far from lust, for could I but have lived
> In presence of you, I had had my end.
>
> *Philaster.*

ANNOT LYLE had now to contemplate the terrible gulf which Allan M'Aulay's declaration of love and jealousy had made to open around her. It seemed as if she was tottering on the very brink of destruction, and was at once deprived of every refuge and of all human assistance. She had long been conscious that she loved Menteith dearer than a brother; indeed, how could it be otherwise, considering their early intimacy, the personal merit of the young nobleman, his assiduous attentions, and his infinite superiority in gentleness of disposition and grace of manners over the race of rude warriors with whom she lived? But her affection was of that quiet, timid, meditative character which sought rather a reflected share in the happiness of the beloved object than formed more presumptuous or daring hopes. A little Gaelic song, in which she expressed her feelings, has been translated by the ingenious and unhappy Andrew M'Donald;[1] and we willingly transcribe the lines:

> Wert thou, like me, in life's low vale,
> With thee, how blest, that lot I 'd share:
> With thee I 'd fly wherever gale
> Could waft or bounding galley bear.
> But parted by severe decree,
> Far different must our fortunes prove:
> May thine be joy; enough for me
> To weep and pray for him I love.
>
> The pangs this foolish heart must feel,
> When hope shall be for ever flown,

[1] See Andrew M'Donald. Note 10.

No sullen murmur shall reveal,
No selfish murmurs ever own.
Nor will I through life's weary years,
Like a pale drooping mourner move,
While I can think my secret tears
May wound the heart of him I love.

The furious declaration of Allan had destroyed the romantic plan which she had formed of nursing in secret her pensive tenderness, without seeking any other requital. Long before this, she had dreaded Allan, as much as gratitude, and a sense that he softened towards her a temper so haughty and so violent, could permit her to do; but now she regarded him with unalloyed terror, which a perfect knowledge of his disposition and of his preceding history too well authorised her to entertain. Whatever was in other respects the nobleness of his disposition, he had never been known to resist the wilfulness of passion: he walked in the house and in the country of his fathers like a tamed lion, whom no one dared to contradict, lest they should awaken his natural vehemence of passion. So many years had elapsed since he had experienced contradiction, or even expostulation, that probably nothing but the strong good sense which on all points, his mysticism excepted, formed the ground of his character, prevented his proving an annoyance and terror to the whole neighbourhood. But Annot had no time to dwell upon her fears, being interrupted by the entrance of Sir Dugald Dalgetty.

It may well be supposed that the scenes in which this person had passed his former life had not much qualified him to shine in female society. He himself felt a sort of consciousness that the language of the barrack, guard-room, and parade was not proper to entertain ladies. The only peaceful part of his life had been spent at Marischal College, Aberdeen; and he had forgot the little he had learned there, except the arts of darning his own hose and despatching his commons with unusual celerity, both which had since been kept in good exercise by the necessity of frequent practice. Still it was from an imperfect recollection of what he had acquired during this pacific period that he drew his sources of conversation when in company with women: in other words, his language became pedantic when it ceased to be military.

'Mistress Annot Lyle,' said he upon the present occasion, 'I am just now like the half pike or spontoon of Achilles, one end of which could wound and the other cure—a property belonging neither to Spanish pike, brown bill, partizan, halberd,

Lochaber axe, or indeed any other modern staff-weapon whatever.'

This compliment he repeated twice; but as Annot scarce heard him the first time, and did not comprehend him the second, he was obliged to explain.

'I mean,' he said, 'Mistress Annot Lyle, that, having been the means of an honourable knight receiving a severe wound in this day's conflict, he having pistolled, somewhat against the law of arms, my horse, which was named after the immortal King of Sweden, I am desirous of procuring him such solacement as you, madam, can supply; you being, like the heathen god Esculapius (meaning possibly Apollo), skilful not only in song and in music, but in the more noble art of chirurgery: *opiferque per orbem dicor*.'

'If you would have the goodness to explain,' said Annot, too sick at heart to be amused by Sir Dugald's airs of pedantic gallantry.

'That, madam,' replied the Knight, 'may not be so easy, as I am out of the habit of construing; but we shall try. *Dicor*, supply *ego* - I am called. *Opifer! opifer!* I remember *signifer* and *furcifer*, but I believe *opifer* stands in this place for M. D., that is, Doctor of Physic.'

'This is a busy day with us all,' said Annot; 'will you say at once what you want with me?'

'Merely,' replied Sir Dugald, 'that you will visit my brother knight, and let your maiden bring some medicaments for his wound, which threatens to be what the learned call a *damnum fatale*.'

Annot Lyle never lingered in the cause of humanity. She informed herself hastily of the nature of the injury, and interesting herself for the dignified old Chief whom she had seen at Darnlinvarach, and whose presence had so much struck her, she hastened to lose the sense of her own sorrow for a time in the attempt to be useful to another.

Sir Dugald with great form ushered Annot Lyle to the chamber of her patient, in which, to her surprise, she found Lord Menteith. She could not help blushing deeply at the meeting, but, to hide her confusion, proceeded instantly to examine the wound of the Knight of Ardenvohr, and easily satisfied herself that it was beyond her skill to cure it. As for Sir Dugald, he returned to a large outhouse, on the floor of which, among other wounded men, was deposited the person of Ranald of the Mist.

'Mine old friend,' said the Knight, 'as I told you before, I would willingly do anything to pleasure you, in return for the wound you have received while under my safe-conduct. I have, therefore, according to your earnest request, sent Mrs. Annot Lyle to attend upon the wound of the Knight of Ardenvohr, though wherein her doing so should benefit you I cannot imagine. I think you once spoke of some blood relationship between them; but a soldado, in command and charge like me, has other things to trouble his head with than Highland genealogies.'

And indeed, to do the worthy Major justice, he never inquired after, listened to, or recollected the business of other people, unless it either related to the art military or was somehow or other connected with his own interest, in either of which cases his memory was very tenacious.

'And now, my good friend of the Mist,' said he, 'can you tell me what has become of your hopeful grandson, as I have not seen him since he assisted me to disarm after the action, a negligence which deserveth the strapado?'

'He is not far from hence,' said the wounded outlaw; 'lift not your hand upon him, for he is man enough to pay a yard of leathern scourge with a foot of tempered steel.'

'A most improper vaunt,' said Sir Dugald; 'but I owe you some favours, Ranald, and therefore shall let it pass.'

'And if you think you owe me anything,' said the outlaw, 'it is in your power to requite me by granting me a boon.'

'Friend Ranald,' answered Dalgetty, 'I have read of these boons in silly story-books, whereby simple knights were drawn into engagements to their great prejudice; wherefore, Ranald, the more prudent knights of this day never promise anything until they know that they may keep their word anent the premises, without any displeasure or incommodement to themselves. It may be, you would have me engage the female chirurgeon to visit your wound; though you ought to consider, Ranald, that the uncleanness of the place where you are deposited may somewhat soil the gaiety of her garments, concerning the preservation of which, you may have observed, women are apt to be inordinately solicitous. I lost the favour of the lady of the Grand Pensionary of Amsterdam by touching with the sole of my boot the train of her black velvet gown, which I mistook for a foot-cloth, it being half the room distant from her person.'

'It is not to bring Annot Lyle hither,' answered MacEagh, 'but to transport me into the room where she is in attendance

upon the Knight of Ardenvohr. Somewhat I have to say of the last consequence to them both.'

'It is something out of the order of due precedence,' said Dalgetty, 'to carry a wounded outlaw into the presence of a knight, knighthood having been of yore, and being in some respects still, the highest military grade, independent always of commissioned officers, who rank according to their patents; nevertheless, as your boon, as you call it, is so slight, I shall not deny compliance with the same.' So saying, he ordered three files of men to transport MacEagh on their shoulders to Sir Duncan Campbell's apartment, and he himself hastened before to announce the cause of his being brought thither. But such was the activity of the soldiers employed, that they followed him close at the heels, and, entering with their ghastly burden, laid MacEagh on the floor of the apartment. His features, naturally wild, were now distorted by pain, his hands and scanty garments stained with his own blood and that of others, which no kind hand had wiped away, although the wound in his side had been secured by a bandage.

'Are you,' he said, raising his head painfully towards the couch where lay stretched his late antagonist, 'he whom men call the Knight of Ardenvohr?'

'The same,' answered Sir Duncan; 'what would you with one whose hours are now numbered?'

'My hours are reduced to minutes,' said the outlaw; 'the more grace, if I bestow them in the service of one whose hand has ever been against me, as mine has been raised higher against him.'

'Thine higher against me, crushed worm!' said the Knight, looking down on his miserable adversary.

'Yes,' answered the outlaw, in a firm voice, 'my arm hath been highest. In the deadly contest betwixt us, the wounds I have dealt have been deepest, though thine have neither been idle nor unfelt. I am Ranald MacEagh — I am Ranald of the Mist: the night that I gave thy castle to the winds in one huge blaze of fire is now matched with the day in which you have fallen under the sword of my fathers. Remember the injuries thou hast done our tribe; never were such inflicted, save by *one* beside thee. He, they say, is fated and secure against our vengeance; a short time will show.'

'My Lord Menteith,' said Sir Duncan, raising himself out of his bed, 'this is a proclaimed villain, at once the enemy of King and Parliament, of God and man, one of the outlawed banditti

of the Mist, alike the enemy of your house, of the M'Aulays, and of mine. I trust you will not suffer moments which are perhaps my last to be embittered by his barbarous triumph.'

'He shall have the treatment he merits,' said Menteith; 'let him be instantly removed.'

Sir Dugald here interposed, and spoke of Ranald's services as a guide, and his own pledge for his safety; but the high harsh tones of the outlaw drowned his voice.

'No,' said he, 'be rack and gibbet the word! Let me wither between heaven and earth, and gorge the hawks and eagles of Ben Nevis; and so shall this haughty Knight and this triumphant Thane never learn the secret I alone can impart; a secret which would make Ardenvohr's heart leap with joy were he in the death-agony, and which the Earl of Menteith would purchase at the price of his broad earldom. Come hither, Annot Lyle,' he said, raising himself with unexpected strength; 'fear not the sight of him to whom thou hast clung in infancy. Tell these proud men, who disdain thee as the issue of mine ancient race, that thou art no blood of ours — no daughter of the race of the Mist, but born in halls as lordly, and cradled on couch as soft, as ever soothed infancy in their proudest palaces.'

'In the name of God,' said Menteith, trembling with emotion, 'if you know aught of the birth of this lady, do thy conscience the justice to disburden it of the secret before departing from this world!'

'And bless my enemies with my dying breath?' said MacFagh, looking at him malignantly. 'Such are the maxims your priests preach: but when, or towards whom, do you practise them? Let me know first the worth of my secret ere I part with it. What would you give, Knight of Ardenvohr, to know that your superstitious fasts have been vain, and that there still remains a descendant of your house? I pause for an answer; without it, I speak not one word more.

'I could,' said Sir Duncan, his voice struggling between the emotions of doubt, hatred, and anxiety — 'I could — but that I know thy race are like the Great Enemy, liars and murderers from the beginning — but could it be true thou tellest me, I could almost forgive thee the injuries thou hast done me.'

'Hear it!' said Ranald; 'he hath wagered deeply for a Son of Diarmid. And you, gentle Thane — the report of the camp says that you would purchase with life and lands the tidings that Annot Lyle was no daughter of proscription, but of a race noble in your estimation as your own. Well, it is for no love

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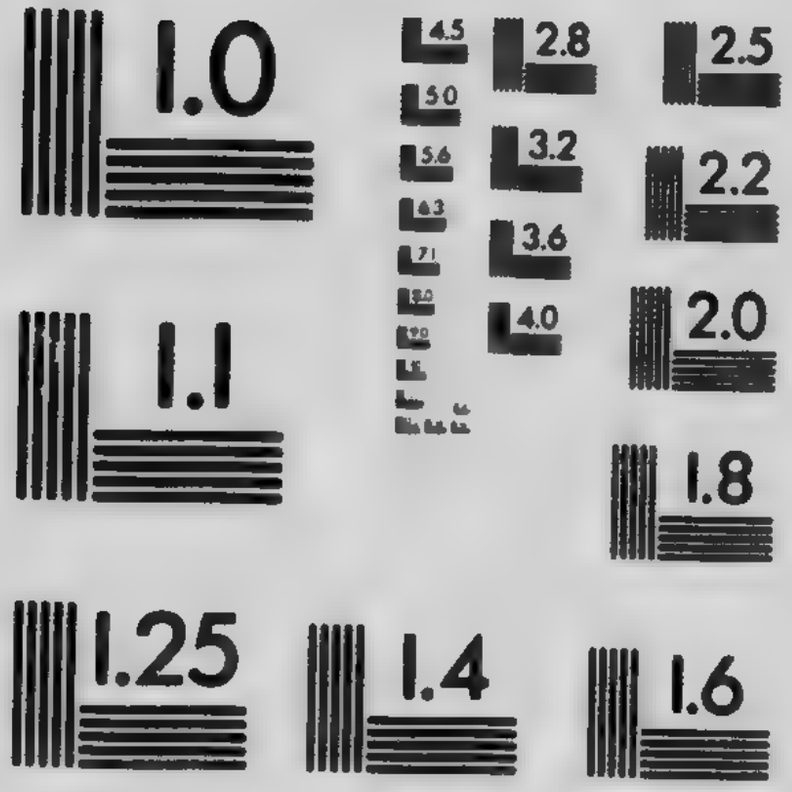

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I tell you. The time has been that I would have exchanged this secret against liberty; I am now bartering it for what is dearer than liberty or life. Annot Lyle is the youngest, the sole surviving child of the Knight of Ardenvohr, who alone was saved when all in his halls besides was given to blood and ashes.'

'Can this man speak truth?' said Annot Lyle, scarce knowing what she said; 'or is this some strange delusion?'

'Maiden,' replied Ranald, 'hadst thou dwelt longer with us, thou wouldst have better learnt to know how to distinguish the accents of truth. To that Saxon lord and to the Knight of Ardenvohr I will yield such proofs of what I have spoken that incredulity shall stand convinced. Meantime, withdraw: I loved thine infancy, I hate not thy youth: no eye hates the rose in its blossom, though it groweth upon a thorn, and for thee only do I something regret what is soon to follow. But he that would avenge him of his foe must not reck though the guiltless be engaged in the ruin.'

'He advises well, Annot,' said Lord Menteith; 'in God's name retire! If - if there be aught in this, your meeting with Sir Duncan must be more prepared for both your sakes.'

'I will not part from my father, if I have found one!' said Annot — 'I will not part from him under circumstances so terrible.'

'And a father you shall ever find in me,' murmured Sir Duncan.

'Then,' said Menteith, 'I will have MacEagh removed into an adjacent apartment, and will collect the evidence of his tale myself. Sir Dugald Dalgetty will give me his attendance and assistance.'

'With pleasure, my lord,' answered Sir Dugald. 'I will be your confessor or assessor, either or both. No one can be so fit, for I had heard the whole story a month ago at Inverary Castle; but onslaughts like that of Ardenvohr confuse each other in my memory, which is besides occupied with matters of more importance.'

Upon hearing this frank declaration, which was made as they left the apartment with the wounded man, Lord Menteith darted upon Dalgetty a look of extreme anger and disdain, to which the self-conceit of the worthy commander rendered him totally insensible.

CHAPTER XXII

I am as free as nature first made man,
Ere the base laws of servitude began,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

Conquest of Granada.

THE Earl of Menteith, as he had undertaken, so he proceeded to investigate more closely the story told by Ranald of the Mist, which was corroborated by the examination of his two followers, who had assisted in the capacity of guides. These declarations he carefully compared with such circumstances concerning the destruction of his castle and family as Sir Duncan Campbell was able to supply: and it may be supposed he had forgotten nothing relating to an event of such terrific importance. It was of the last consequence to prove that this was no invention of the outlaw's, for the purpose of passing an impostor as the child and heiress of Ardenvohr.

Perhaps Menteith, so much interested in believing the tale, was not altogether the fittest person to be entrusted with the investigation of its truth; but the examinations of the Children of the Mist were simple, accurate, and in all respects consistent with each other. A personal mark was referred to, which was known to have been borne by the infant child of Sir Duncan, and which appeared upon the left shoulder of Annot Lyle. It was also well remembered that, when the miserable relics of the other children had been collected, those of the infant had nowhere been found. Other circumstances of evidence which it is unnecessary to quote brought the fullest conviction not only to Menteith but to the unprejudiced mind of Montrose, that in Annot Lyle, an humble dependant, distinguished only by beauty and talent, they were in future to respect the heiress of Ardenvohr.

While Menteith hastened to communicate the result of these inquiries to the persons most interested, the outlaw demanded to speak with his grandchild, whom he usually called his son

'He would be found,' he said, 'in the outer apartment in which he himself had been originally deposited.'

Accordingly, the young savage, after a close search, was found lurking in a corner, coiled up among some rotten straw, and brought to his grandsire.

'Kenneth,' said the old outlaw, 'hear the last words of the sire of thy father. A Saxon soldier and Allan of the Red Hand left this camp within these few hours, to travel to the country of Caberfae. Pursue them as the bloodhound pursues the hurt deer, swim the lake, climb the mountain, thread the forest, tarry not until you join them'; and then the countenance of the lad darkened as his grandfather spoke, and he laid his hand upon a knife which stuck in the thong of leather that confined his scanty plaid. 'No!' said the old man; 'it is not by thy hand he must fall. They will ask the news from the camp: say to them that Annot Lyle of the Harp is discovered to be the daughter of Duncan of Ardenvohr; that the Thane of Menteith is to wed her before the priest; and that you are sent to bid guests to the bridal. Tarry not their answer, but vanish like the lightning when the black cloud swallows it. And now depart, beloved son of my best beloved! I shall never more see thy face, nor hear the light sound of thy footstep yet tarry an instant and hear my last charge. Remember the fate of our race, and quit not the ancient manners of the Children of the Mist. We are now a straggling handful, driven from every vale by the sword of every clan, who rule in the possessions where their forefathers hewed the wood and drew the water for ours. But in the thicket of the wilderness and in the mist of the mountain, Kenneth, son of Eracht, keep thou unsoiled the freedom which I leave thee as a birthright. Barter it not, neither for the rich garment, nor for the stone roof, nor for the covered board, nor for the couch of down; on the rock or in the valley, in abundance or in famine, in the leafy summer and in the days of the iron winter, Son of the Mist, be free as thy forefathers. Own no lord, receive no law, take no hire, give no stipend, build no hut, inclose no pasture, sow no grain: let the deer of the mountain be thy flocks and herds; if these fail thee, prey upon the goods of our oppressors of the Saxons, and of such Gael as are Saxons in their souls, valuing herds and flocks more than honour and freedom. Well for us that they do so; it affords the broader scope for our revenge. Remember those who have done kindness to our race, and pay their services with thy blood should the hour

require it. If a Maclan shall come to thee with the head of the king's son in his hand, shelter him, though the avenging army of the father were behind him; for in Glencoe and Ardnamurchan we have dwelt in peace in the years that have gone by. The Sons of Diarmid, the race of Darnlinvarach, the riders of Menteith, my curse on thy head, Child of the Mist, if thou spare one of those names when the time shall offer for cutting them off! And it will come anon, for their own swords shall devour each other, and those who are scattered shall fly to the Mist, and perish by its Children. Once more begone; shake the dust from thy feet against the habitations of men, whether banded together for peace or for war. Farewell, beloved! and mayst thou die like thy forefathers, ere infirmity, disease, or age shall break thy spirit. Begone! begone! Live free, requite kindness, avenge the injuries of thy race!'

The young savage stooped and kissed the brow of his dying parent; but, accustomed from infancy to suppress every exterior sign of emotion, he parted without tear or adieu, and was soon far beyond the limits of Montrose's camp.

Sir Dugald Dalgetty, who was present during the latter part of this scene, was very little edified by the conduct of MacEagh upon the occasion. 'I cannot think, my friend Ranald,' said he, 'that you are in the best possible road for a dying man. Storms, onslaughts, massacres, the burning of suburbs, are indeed a soldier's daily work, and are justified by the necessity of the case, seeing that they are done in the course of duty; for burning of suburbs, in particular, it may be said that they are traitors and cut-throats to all fortified towns. Hence it is plain that a soldier's is a profession peculiarly favoured by Heaven, seeing that we may hope for salvation although we daily commit actions of so great violence. But then, Ranald, in all services of Europe it is the custom of the dying soldier not . vaunt him of such doings, or to recommend them to his fellows; but, on the contrary, to express contrition for the same, and to repeat, or have repeated to him, some comfortable prayer, which, if you please, I will intercede with his Excellency's chaplain to prefer on your account. It is otherwise no point of my duty to put you in mind of those things; only it may be for the ease of your conscience to depart more like a Christian and less like a Turk than you seem to be in a fair way of doing.'

The only answer of the dying man — for as such Ranald MacEagh might now be considered — was a request to be raised

to such a position that he might obtain a view from the window of the castle. The deep frost mist, which had long settled upon the top of the mountains, was now rolling down each rugged glen and gully, where the craggy ridges showed their black and irregular outline, like desert islands rising above the ocean of vapour. 'Spirit of the Mist!' said Ranald MacEagh, 'called by our race our father and our preserver, receive into thy tabernacle of clouds, when this pang is over, him whom in life thou hast so often sheltered.' So saying, he sunk back into the arms of those who upheld him, spoke no further word, but turned his face to the wall for a short space.

'I believe,' said Dalgetty, 'my friend Ranald will be found in his heart to be little better than a heathen.' And he renewed his proposal to procure him the assistance of Dr. Wisheart, Montrose's military chaplain; 'a man,' said Sir Dugald, 'very clever in his exercise, and who will do execution on your sins in less time than I could smoke a pipe of tobacco.'

'Saxon,' said the dying man, 'speak to me no more of thy priest; I die contented. Hadst thou ever an enemy against whom weapons were of no avail, whom the ball missed, and against whom the arrow shivered, and whose bare skin was as impenetrable to sword and dirk as thy steel garment? Heardst thou ever of such a foe?'

'Very frequently, when I served in Germany,' replied Sir Dugald. 'There was such a fellow at Ingolstadt; he was proof both against lead and steel. The soldiers killed him with the butts of their muskets.'

'This impassible foe,' said Ranald, without regarding the Major's interruption, 'who has the blood dearest to me upon his hands—to this man I have now bequeathed agony of mind, jealousy, despair, and sudden death, or a life more miserable than death itself. Such shall be the lot of Allan of the Red Hand when he learns that Annot weds Menteith; and I ask no more than the certainty that it is so to sweeten my own bloody end by his hand.'

'If that be the case,' said the Major, 'there 's no more to be said; but I shall take care as few people see you as possible, for I cannot think your mode of departure can be at all creditable or exemplary to a Christian army.' So saying, he left the apartment, and the Son of the Mist soon after breathed his last.

Menteith, in the meanwhile, leaving the new-found relations to their mutual feelings of mingled emotion, was eagerly discussing with Montrose the consequences of this discovery. 'I

should now see,' said the Marquis, 'even had I not before observed it, that your interest in this discovery, my dear Menteith, has no small reference to your own happiness. You love this new-found lady, your affection is returned. In point of birth, no exceptions can be made; in every other respect her advantages are equal to those which you yourself possess. Think, however, a moment. Sir Duncan is a fanatic — Presbyterian, at least — in arms against the King; he is only with us in the quality of a prisoner, and we are, I fear, but at the commencement of a long civil war. Is this a time, think you, Menteith, for you to make proposals for his heiress? Or what chance is there that he will now listen to it?'

Passion, an ingenious as well as an eloquent advocate, supplied the young nobleman with a thousand answers to these objections. He reminded Montrose that the Knight of Ardenvohr was neither a bigot in politics nor religion. He urged his own known and proved zeal for the royal cause, and hinted that its influence might be extended and strengthened by his wedding the heiress of Ardenvohr. He pleaded the dangerous state of Sir Duncan's wound, the risk which must be run by suffering the young lady to be carried into the country of the Campbells, where, in case of her father's death or continued indisposition, she must necessarily be placed under the guardianship of Argyle, an event fatal to his (Menteith's) hopes, unless he could stoop to purchase his favour by abandoning the King's party.

Montrose allowed the force of these arguments, and owned, although the matter was attended with difficulty, yet it seemed consistent with the King's service that it should be concluded as speedily as possible.

'I could wish,' said he, 'that it were all settled in one way or another, and that this fair Briseis were removed from our camp before the return of our Highland Achilles, Allan M'Aulay. I fear some fatal feud in that quarter, Menteith; and I believe it would be best that Sir Duncan be dismissed on his parole, and that you accompany him and his daughter as his escort. The journey can be made chiefly by water, so will not greatly incommode his wound; and your own, my friend, will be an honourable excuse for the absence of some time from my camp.'

'Never!' said Menteith. 'Were I to forfeit the very hope that has so lately dawned upon me, never will I leave your Excellency's camp while the royal standard is displayed. I should deserve that this trifling scratch should gangrene and

consume my sword-arm, were I capable of holding it as an excuse for absence at this crisis of the King's affairs.'

'On this, then, you are determined?' said Montrose.

'As fixed as Ben Nevis,' said the young nobleman.

'You must, then,' said Montrose, 'lose no time in seeking an explanation with the Knight of Ardenvohr. If this prove favourable, I will talk myself with the elder M'Aulay, and we will devise means to employ his brother at a distance from the army until he shall be reconciled to his present disappointment. Would to God some vision would descend upon his imagination fair enough to obliterate all traces of Annot Lyle! That perhaps you think impossible, Menteith? Well, each to his service; you to that of Cupid, and I to that of Mars.'

They parted, and in pursuance of the scheme arranged, Menteith, early on the ensuing morning, sought a private interview with the wounded Knight of Ardenvohr, and communicated to him his suit for the hand of his daughter. Of their mutual attachment Sir Duncan was aware, but he was not prepared for so early a declaration on the part of Menteith. He said, at first, that he had already, perhaps, indulged too much in feelings of personal happiness, at a time when his clan had sustained so great a loss and humiliation, and that he was unwilling, therefore, farther to consider the advancement of his own house at a period so calamitous. On the more urgent suit of the noble lover, he requested a few hours to deliberate and consult with his daughter upon a question so highly important.

The result of this interview and deliberation was favourable to Menteith. Sir Duncan Campbell became fully sensible that the happiness of his new-found daughter depended upon a union with her lover; and unless such were now formed, he saw that Argyle would throw a thousand obstacles in the way of a match in every respect acceptable to himself. Menteith's private character was so excellent, and such was the rank and consideration due to his fortune and family, that they outbalanced, in Sir Duncan's opinion, the difference in their political opinions. Nor could he have resolved, perhaps, had his own opinion of the match been less favourable, to decline an opportunity of indulging the new-found child of his hopes. There was, besides, a feeling of pride which dictated his determination. To produce the heiress of Ardenvohr to the world as one who had been educated a poor dependant and musician in the family of Darnlinvarach had something in it that was humiliating. To intro-

duce her as the betrothed bride, or wedded wife, of the Earl of Menteith, upon an attachment formed during her obscurity, was a warrant to the world that she had at all times been worthy of the rank to which she was elevated.

It was under the influence of these considerations that Sir Duncan Campbell announced to the lovers his consent that they should be married in the chapel of the castle by Montrose's chaplain, and as privately as possible. But when Montrose should break up from Inverlochy, for which orders were expected in the course of a very few days, it was agreed that the young Countess should depart with her father to his castle, and remain there until the circumstances of the nation permitted Menteith to retire with honour from his present military employment. His resolution being once taken, Sir Duncan Campbell would not permit the maidenly scruples of his daughter to delay its execution; and it was therefore resolved that the bridal should take place the next evening, being the second after the battle.

CHAPTER XXIII

My maid, my blue-eyed maid, he bore away,
Due to the toils of many a bloody day.

Hind.

IT was necessary, for many reasons, that Angus M'Aulay, so long the kind protector of Annot Lyle, should be made acquainted with the change in the fortunes of his late *protégée*; and Montrose, as he had undertaken, communicated to him these remarkable events. With the careless and cheerful indifference of his character, he expressed much more joy than wonder at Annot's good fortune; had no doubt whatever she would merit it, and, as she had always been bred in loyal principles, would convey the whole estate of her grim fanatical father to some honest fellow who loved the King. 'I should have no objection that my brother Allan should try his chance,' added he, 'notwithstanding that Sir Duncan Campbell was the only man who ever charged Darnlinvarach with inhospitality. Annot Lyle could always charm Allan out of the sullens, and who knows whether matrimony might not make him more a man of this world?'

Montrose hastened to interrupt the progress of his castle-building by informing him that the lady was already wooed and won, and, with her father's approbation, was almost immediately to be wedded to his kinsman, the Earl of Menteith; and that in testimony of the high respect due to M'Aulay, so long the lady's protector, he was now to request his presence at the ceremony.

M'Aulay looked very grave at this intimation, and drew up his person with the air of one who thought that he had been neglected. 'He conceived,' he said, 'that his uniform kind treatment of the young lady, while so many years under his roof, required something more upon such an occasion than a bare compliment of ceremony. He might,' he thought, 'without arrogance, have expected to have been consulted. He wished his kinsman of

Menteith well, no man could wish him better; but he must say he thought he had been hasty in this matter. Allan's sentiments towards the young lady had been pretty well understood, and he, for one, could not see why the superior pretensions which he had upon her gratitude should have been set aside, without at least undergoing some previous discussion.'

Montrose, seeing too well where all this pointed, entreated M'Aulay to be reasonable, and to consider what probability there was that the Knight of Ardenvohr could be brought to confer the hand of his sole heiress upon Allan, whose undeniable excellent qualities were mingled with others by which they were overclouded in a manner that made all tremble who approached him.

'My lord,' said Angus M'Aulay, 'my brother Allan has, as God made us all, faults as well as merits; but he is the best and bravest man of your army, be the other who he may, and therefore ill deserved that his happiness should have been so little consulted by your Excellency, by his own near kinsman, and by a young person who owes all to him and to his family.'

Montrose in vain endeavoured to place the subject in a different view; this was the point in which Angus was determined to regard it, and he was a man of that calibre of understanding who is incapable of being convinced when he has once adopted a prejudice. Montrose now assumed a higher tone, and called upon Angus to take care how he nourished any sentiments which might be prejudicial to his Majesty's service. He pointed out to him that he was peculiarly desirous that Allan's efforts should not be interrupted in the course of his present mission; 'a mission,' he said, 'highly honourable for himself, and likely to prove most advantageous to the King's cause. He expected his brother would hold no communication with him upon other subjects, nor stir up any cause of dissension which might divert his mind from a matter of such importance.'

Angus answered somewhat sulkily that 'he was no make-bate or stirrer up of quarrels; he would rather be a peace-maker. His brother knew as well as most men how to resent his own quarrels; as for Allan's mode of receiving information, it was generally believed he had other sources than those of ordinary couriers. He should not be surprised if they saw him sooner than they expected.'

A promise that he would not interfere was the farthest to

which Montrose could bring this man, thoroughly good-tempered as he was on all occasions save when his pride, interest, or prejudices were interfered with. And at this point the Marquis was fain to leave the matter for the present.

A more willing guest at the bridal ceremony, certainly a more willing attendant at the marriage feast, was to be expected in Sir Dugald Dalgetty, whom Montrose resolved to invite, as having been a confidant to the circumstances which preceded it. But even Sir Dugald hesitated, looked on the elbows of his doublet and the knees of his leather breeches, and mumbled out a sort of reluctant acquiescence in the invitation, providing he should find it possible, after consulting with the noble bridegroom.

Montrose was somewhat surprised; but scorning to testify displeasure, he left Sir Dugald to pursue his own course. This carried him instantly to the chamber of the bridegroom, who, amidst the scanty wardrobe which his camp-equipage afforded, was seeking for such articles as might appear to the best advantage upon the approaching occasion. Sir Dugald entered and paid his compliments, with a very grave face, upon his approaching happiness, which, he said, 'he was very sorry he was prevented from witnessing.'

'In plain truth,' said he, 'I should but disgrace the ceremony, seeing that I lack a bridal garment. Rents and open seams and tatters at elbows in the apparel of the assistants might presage a similar solution of continuity in your matrimonial happiness; and to say truth, my lord, you yourself must partly have the blame of this disappointment, in respect you sent me upon a fool's errand to get a buff-coat out of the booty taken by the Camerons, whereas you might as well have sent me to fetch a pound of fresh butter out of a black dog's throat. I had no answer, my lord, but brandished dirks and broadswords, and a sort of growling and jabbering in what they call their language. For my part, I believe these Highlanders to be no better than absolute pagans, and have been much scandalised by the manner in which my acquaintance, Ranald MacFagh, was pleased to beat his final march a little while since.'

In Menteith's state of mind, disposed to be pleased with everything and everybody, the grave complaint of Sir Dugald furnished additional amusement. He requested his acceptance of a very handsome buff-dress which was lying on the floor. 'I had intended it,' he said, 'for my own bridal-garment, as

being the least formidable of my warlike equipments, and I have here no peaceful dress.'

Sir Dugald made the necessary apologies — would not by any means deprive, and so forth — until it happily occurred to him that it was much more according to military rule that the Earl should be married in his back and breast pieces, which dress he had seen the bridegroom wear at the union of Prince Leo of Wittelsbach with the youngest daughter of old George Frederick of Saxony, under the auspices of the gallant Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and so forth. The good-natured young Earl laughed and acquiesced; and thus having secured at least one merry face at his bridal, he put on a light and ornamented cuirass, concealed partly by a velvet coat, and partly by a broad blue silk scarf, which he wore over his shoulder, agreeably to his rank and the fashion of the times.

Everything was now arranged; and it had been settled that, according to the custom of the country, the bride and bridegroom should not again meet until they were before the altar. The hour had already struck that summoned the bridegroom thither, and he only waited in a small ante-room adjacent to the chapel for the Marquis, who condescended to act as bridesman upon the occasion. Business relating to the army having suddenly required the Marquis's instant attention, Menteith waited his return, it may be supposed, in some impatience; and when he heard the door of the apartment open, he said, laughing, 'You are late upon parade.'

'You will find I am too early,' said Allan M'Aulay, who burst into the apartment. 'Draw, Menteith, and defend yourself like a man, or die like a dog!'

'You are mad, Allan!' answered Menteith, astonished alike at his sudden appearance and at the unutterable fury of his demeanour. His cheeks were livid, his eyes started from their sockets, his lips were covered with foam, and his gestures were those of a demoniac.

'You lie, traitor!' was his frantic reply — 'you lie in that, as you lie in all you have said to me. Your life is a lie!'

'Did I not speak my thoughts when I called you mad,' said Menteith, indignantly, 'your own life were a brief one. In what do you charge me with deceiving you?'

'You told me,' answered M'Aulay, 'that you would not marry Annot Lyle! False traitor! she now waits you at the altar.'

'It is you who speak false,' retorted Menteith. 'I told you the obscurity of her birth was the only bar to our union, that is now removed; and whom do you think yourself, that I should yield up my pretensions in your favour?'

'Draw, then,' said M'Aulay; 'we understand each other.'

'Not now,' said Menteith, 'and not here. Allan, you know me well; wait till to-morrow, and you shall have fighting enough.'

'This hour, this instant, or never,' answered M'Aulay. 'Your triumph shall not go farther than the hour which is stricken. Menteith, I entreat you by our relationship, by our joint conflicts and labours, draw your sword and defend your life!' As he spoke, he seized the Earl's hand and wrung it with such frantic earnestness that his grasp forced the blood to start under the nails. Menteith threw him off with violence, exclaiming, 'Begone, madman!'

'Then, be the vision accomplished!' said Allan; and, drawing his dirk, struck with his whole gigantic force at the Earl's bosom. The temper of the corslet threw the point of the weapon upwards, but a deep wound took place between the neck and shoulder; and the force of the blow prostrated the bridegroom on the floor. Montrose entered at one side of the anteroom. The bridal company, alarmed at the noise, were in equal apprehension and surprise; but ere Montrose could almost see what had happened, Allan M'Aulay had rushed past him and descended the castle stairs like lightning. 'Guards, shut the gate!' exclaimed Montrose. 'Seize him; kill him if he resists! He shall die, if he were my brother!'

But Allan prostrated, with a second blow of his dagger, a sentinel who was upon duty, traversed the camp like a mountain-deer, though pursued by all who caught the alarm, threw himself into the river, and, swimming to the opposite side, was soon lost among the woods. In the course of the same evening his brother Angus and his followers left Montrose's camp, and, taking the road homeward, never again rejoined him.

Of Allan himself it is said that, in a wonderfully short space after the deed was committed, he burst into a room in the Castle of Inverary, where Argyle was sitting in council, and flung on the table his bloody dirk.

'Is it the blood of James Graham?' said Argyle, a ghastly expression of hope mixing with the terror which the sudden apparition naturally excited.

'It is the blood of his minion,' answered M'Aulay; 'it is the blood which I was predestined to shed, though I would rather have spilt my own.'

Having thus spoken, he turned and left the castle, and from that moment nothing certain is known of his fate. As the boy Kenneth, with three of the Children of the Mist, were seen soon afterwards to cross Loch Fine, it is supposed they dogged his course, and that he perished by their hand in some obscure wilderness. Another opinion maintains that Allan M'Aulay went abroad and died a monk of the Carthusian order. But nothing beyond bare presumption could ever be brought in support of either opinion.

His vengeance was much less complete than he probably fancied; for Menteith, though so severely wounded as to remain long in a dangerous state, was, by having adopted Major Dalgetty's fortunate recommendation of a cuirass as a bridal-garment, happily secured from the worst consequences of the blow. But his services were lost to Montrose; and it was thought best that he should be conveyed with his intended countess, now truly a mourning bride, and should accompany his wounded father-in-law to the castle of Sir Duncan at Ardenvohr. Dalgetty followed them to the water's edge, reminding Menteith of the necessity of erecting a sconce on Drumsnab to cover his lady's newly-acquired inheritance.

They performed their voyage in safety, and Menteith was in a few weeks so well in health as to be united to Annot in the castle of her father.

The Highlanders were somewhat puzzled to reconcile Menteith's recovery with the visions of the second sight, and the more experienced seers were displeased with him for not having died. But others thought the credit of the vision sufficiently fulfilled by the wound inflicted by the hand, and with the weapon, foretold; and all were of opinion that the incident of the ring with the death's head related to the death of the bride's father, who did not survive her marriage many months. The incredulous held that all this was idle dreaming, and that Allan's supposed vision was but a consequence of the private suggestions of his own passion, which, having long seen in Menteith a rival more beloved than himself, struggled with his better nature, and impressed upon him, as it were involuntarily, the idea of killing his competitor.

Menteith did not recover sufficiently to join Montrose during his brief and glorious career; and when that heroic general

disbanded his army and retired from Scotland, Menteith resolved to adopt the life of privacy, which he led till the Restoration. After that happy event, he occupied a situation in the land befitting his rank, lived long, happy alike in public regard and in domestic affection, and died at a good old age.

Our *dramatis personæ* have been so limited that, excepting Montrose, whose exploits and fate are the theme of history, we have only to mention Sir Dugald Dalgetty. This gentleman continued, with the most rigorous punctuality, to discharge his duty and to receive his pay, until he was made prisoner, among others, upon the field of Philiphaugh. He was condemned to share the fate of his fellow-officers upon that occasion, who were doomed to death rather by denunciations from the pulpit than the sentence either of civil or military tribunal; their blood being considered as a sort of sin-offering to take away the guilt of the land, and the fate imposed upon the Canaanites, under a special dispensation, being impiously and cruelly applied to them.

Several Lowland officers in the service of the Covenanters interceded for Dalgetty on this occasion, representing him as a person whose skill would be useful in their army, and who would be readily induced to change his service. But on this point they found Sir Dugald unexpectedly obstinate. He had engaged with the King for a certain term, and, till that was expired, his principles would not permit any shadow of changing. The Covenanters, again, understood no such nice distinction, and he was in the utmost danger of falling a martyr, not to this or that political principle, but merely to his own strict ideas of a military enlistment. Fortunately, his friends discovered by computation that there remained but a fortnight to elapse of the engagement he had formed, and to which, though certain it was never to be renewed, no power on earth could make him false. With some difficulty they procured a reprieve for this short space, after which they found him perfectly willing to come under any engagements they chose to dictate. He entered the service of the Estates accordingly, and wrought himself forward to be Major in Gilbert Ker's corps, commonly called the Kirk's Own Regiment of Horse. Of his farther history we know nothing, until we find him in possession of his paternal estate of Drumthwacket, which he acquired, not by the sword, but by a pacific intermarriage with Hannah Strachan, a matron somewhat stricken in years, the widow of the Aberdeenshire Covenanter.

Sir Dugald is supposed to have survived the Revolution, as traditions of no very distant date represent him as cruising about in that country, very old, very deaf, and very full of interminable stories about the immortal Gustavus Adolphus, the Lion of the North, and the Bulwark of the Protestant Faith.

READER! THE TALES OF MY LANDLORD are now finally closed,[1] and it was my purpose to have addressed thee in the vein of Jedediah Cleishbotham; but, like Horam the son of Asmar and all other imaginary story-tellers, Jedediah has melted into thin air.

Mr. Cleishbotham bore the same resemblance to Ariel as he at whose voice he rose doth to the sage Prospero; and yet, so fond are we of the fictions of our own fancy, that I part with him, and all his imaginary localities, with idle reluctance. I am aware this is a feeling in which the reader will little sympathise; but he cannot be more sensible than I am that sufficient varieties have now been exhibited of the Scottish character to exhaust one individual's powers of observation, and that to persist would be useless and tedious. I have the vanity to suppose that the popularity of these Novels has shown my countrymen and their peculiarities in lights which were new to the Southern reader; and that many, hitherto indifferent upon the subject, have been induced to read Scottish history from the allusions to it in these works of fiction.

I retire from the field, conscious that there remains behind not only a large harvest, but labourers capable of gathering it in. More than one writer has of late displayed talents of this description; and if the present Author, himself a phantom, may be permitted to distinguish a brother, or perhaps a sister shadow, he would mention, in particular, the author of the very lively work entitled *Marriage*.

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[1] [The *Legend of Montrose* followed *The Bride of Lammermoor* in Scott's edition of 1829-33. It is printed in this place, along with *The Black Dwarf*, for convenience of publication, the transposition of order having, moreover, the sanction of many years' observance.]

APPENDICES TO INTRODUCTION

No. I

THE scarcity of my late friend's poem may be an excuse for adding the spirited conclusion of *Clan-Alpin's Vow*. The Clan Gregor has met in the ancient church of Balquidder. The head of Drummond-Ernoch is placed on the altar, covered for a time with the banner of the tribe. The Chief of the tribe advances to the altar:

And pausing, on the banner gazed;
Then cried in scorn, with finger raised,
'This was the boon of Scotland's king';
And, with a quick and angry fling,
Tossing the pageant screen away,
The dead man's head before him lay.
Unmoved he scann'd the visage o'er,
The clotted locks were dark with gore,
The features with convulsion grim,
The eyes contorted, sunk, and dim.
But unappall'd, in angry mood,
With lowering brow, unmoved he stood.
Upon the head his bared right hand
He laid, the other grasp'd his brand,
Then kneeling, cried, 'To Heaven I swear
This deed of death I own, and share;
As truly, fully mine, as though
This my right hand had dealt the blow.
Come then, our foemen, one, come all;
If to revenge this caitiff's fall
One blade is bared, one bow is drawn,
Mine everlasting peace I pawn,
To claim from them, or claim from him,
In retribution, limb for limb.
In sudden fray, or open strife,
This steel shall render life for life.'

He ceased; and at his beckoning nod,
The clansmen to the altar trod;
And not a whisper breathed around,
And nought was heard of mortal sound,
Save from the clanking arms they bore,
That rattled on the marble floor.
And each, as he approach'd in haste,
Upon the scalp his right hand placed;
With livid lip, and gather'd brow,
Each uttered, in his turn, the vow.
Fierce Malcolm watch'd the passing scene,
And search'd them through with glances keen,
Then dash'd a tear-drop from his eye;
Unbid it came, he knew not why

Exulting high, he towering stood:
'Kinsmen,' he cried, 'of Alpin's blood,
And worthy of Clan Alpin's name,
Unstain'd by cowardice and shame,
"E'en do, spair nocht," in time of ill,
Shall be Clan Alpin's legend still!'

No. II

It has been disputed whether the Children of the Mist were actual MacGregors, or whether they were not outlaws named MacDonald, belonging to Ardnamurchan. The following act of the Privy Council seems to decide the question:—

'Edinburgh, *4th February*, 1589.

'The same day, the Lords of Secret Council being credibilie informed of ye cruel and mischeivous proceeding of ye wicked Clangrigor, so lang continueing in blood, slaughters, heirships, manifest reifts, and stouths comr..'ted upon his Hieness' peceable and good subjects, inhabiting ye countries ewest ye brays of ye Highlands, thir money years bygone; but specially heir after ye cruel murder of umqll Jo. Drummond of Drummoneyryuch, his Majesties proper tennant, and ane of his fosters of Glenartney, committed upon ye day of last bypast, be certain of ye said clan, be ye counell and determination of ye haill, avow and to defend ye authors yrof qoever wald persew for revenge of ye same, qu ye said Jo. was occupied in seeking of venison to his Hieness, at command of Pat. Lord Drummond, stewart of Stratherne, and principal forrester of Glenartney; the Queen, his Majesties dearest spouse, being yn shortlie looked for to arrive in this realm. Likeas, after ye murder committed, ye authors yrof cutted off ye said umqll Jo. Drummond's head, and carried the same to the Laird of M'Grigor, who, and the haill surname of M'Grigors, purposely conveined upon the Sunday yrafter, at the Kirk of Buchquhidder; qr they caused ye said umqll John's head to be puted to ym, and yr avowing ye sd murder to have been committed by yr communion, counell, and determination, laid yr hands upon the pow, and in eithnik and barbarous manner, swear to defend ye authors of ye sd murder, in maist proud contempt of our sovrn Lord and his autie, and in evil example to others wicked lymmaris to doe ye like, give ys sall be suffered to remain unpunished.'

Then follows a commission to the Earls of Huntly, Argyle, Athole, Montrose; Pat. Lord Drummond, Ja. commendator of Incheffray, And. Campbel of Lochinnel, Duncan Campbel of Ardkinglas, Lauchlane M'Intosh of Dunnauchtane, Sir Jo. Murray of Tullibarden, knt., Geo. Buchanan of that Ilk, and And. M'Farlane of Ariquocher, to search for and apprehend Alaster M'Grigor of Glenstre (and a number of others nominatim), 'and all others of the said Clangrigor, or ye assistars, culpable of the said odious murther, or of thift, reset of thift, heirships, and sornings, qrever they may be apprehended. And if they refuse to be taken, or flees to strengths and houses, to pursue and assege them with fire and sword; and this commission to endure for the space of three years.'

Such was the system of police in 1589; and such the state of Scotland nearly thirty years after the ..eformation.

POSTSCRIPT

WHILE these pages were passing through the press, the Author received a letter from the present Robert Stewart of Ardvoirlich, favouring him with the account of the unhappy slaughter of Lord Kilpont, differing from, and more probable than, that given by Bishop Wishart, whose narrative infers either insanity or the blackest treachery on the part of James Stewart of Ardvoirlich, the ancestor of the present family of that name. It is but fair to give the entire communication as received from my respected correspondent, which is more minute than the histories of the period.

'Although I have not the honour of being personally known to you, I hope you will excuse the liberty I now take, in addressing you on the subject of a transaction more than once alluded to by you, in which an ancestor of mine was unhappily concerned. I allude to the slaughter of Lord Kilpont, son of the Earl of Airth and Menteith, in 1644, by James Stewart of Ardvoirlich. As the cause of this unhappy event, and the quarrel which led to it, have never been correctly stated in any history of the period in which it took place, I am induced, in consequence of your having, in the second series of your admirable Tales on the History of Scotland, adopted Wishart's version of the transaction, and being aware that your having done so will stamp it with an authenticity which it does not merit, and with a view, as far as possible, to do justice to the memory of my unfortunate ancestor, to send you the account of this affair as it has been handed down in the family.

'James Stewart of Ardvoirlich, who lived in the early part of the 17th century, and who was the unlucky cause of the slaughter of Lord Kilpont, as before mentioned, was appointed to the command of one of several independent companies raised in the Highlands at the commencement of the troubles in the reign of Charles I.; another of these companies was under the command of Lord Kilpont, and a strong intimacy, strengthened by a distant relationship, subsisted between them. When Montrose raised the royal standard, Ardvoirlich was one of the first to declare for him, and is said to have been a principal means of bringing over Lord Kilpont to the same cause; and they accordingly, along with Sir John Drummond and their respective followers, joined Montrose, as recorded by Wishart, at Buchanty. While they served together, so strong was their intimacy that they lived and slept in the same tent.

'In the meantime, Montrose had been joined by the Irish under the command of Alexander Macdonald: these, on their march to join Montrose, had committed some excesses on lands belonging to Ardvoirlich, which lay in the line of their march from the west coast. Of this Ardvoirlich complained to Montrose, who, probably wishing as much as possible to conciliate his new allies, treated it in rather an evasive manner. Ardvoirlich, who was a man of violent passions, having failed to receive such satisfaction as he required, challenged Macdonald to single combat. Before they met, however, Montrose, on the information and by advice, as it is said, of Kilpont, laid them both under arrest. Montrose, seeing the evils of such feud at such a critical time, effected a sort of reconciliation between them, and forced them to shake hands in his presence; when it was said that Ardvoirlich, who was a very powerful man, took such a hold of Macdonald's hand as to make the blood start from his fingers. Still, it would appear, Ardvoirlich was by no means reconciled.

'A few days after the battle of Tippermuir, when Montrose with his army was encamped at Coliace, an entertainment was given by him to his officers in honour of the victory he had obtained, and Kilpont and his comrade Ardvoirlich were of the party. After returning to their quarters, Ardvoirlich, who seemed still to brood over his quarrel with Macdonald, and being heated with drink, began to blame Lord Kilpont for the part he had taken in preventing his obtaining redress, and reflecting against Montrose for not

allowing him what he considered proper reparation. Kilpont, of course, defended the conduct of himself and his relative Montrose, till their argument came to high words; and finally, from the state they were both in, by an easy transition to blows, when Ardvoirlich, with his dirk, struck Kilpont dead on the spot. He immediately fled, and under the cover of a thick mist escaped pursuit, leaving his eldest son Henry, who had been mortally wounded at Tippermuir, on his deathbed.

'His followers immediately withdrew from Montrose, and no course remained for him but to throw himself into the arms of the opposite faction, by whom he was well received. His name is frequently mentioned in Leslie's campaigns, and on more than one occasion he is mentioned as having afforded protection to several of his former friends through his interest with Leslie, when the King's cause became desperate.

'The foregoing account of this unfortunate transaction, I am well aware, differs materially from the account given by Wishart, who alleges that Stewart had laid a plot for the assassination of Montrose, and that he murdered Lord Kilpont in consequence of his refusal to participate in his design. Now, I may be allowed to remark that, besides Wishart having always been regarded as a partial historian, and very questionable authority on any subject connected with the motives or conduct of those who differed from him in opinion, that even had Stewart formed such a design, Kilpont, from his name and connexions, was likely to be the very last man of whom Stewart would choose to make a confidant and accomplice. On the other hand, the above account, though never, that I am aware, before hinted at, has been a constant tradition in the family; and, from the comparative recent date of the transaction, and the sources from which the tradition has been derived, I have no reason to doubt its perfect authenticity. It was most circumstantially detailed as above, given to my father, Mr. Stewart, now of Ardvoirlich, many years ago, by a man nearly connected with the family, who lived to the age of 100. This man was a great-grandson of James Stewart, by a natural son John, of whom many stories are still current in this country, under his appellation of John dhu Mohr. This John was with his father at the time, and of course was a witness of the whole transaction; he lived till a considerable time after the Revolution, and it was from him that my father's informant, who was a man before his grandfather, John dhu Mohr's death, received the information as above stated.

'I have many apologies to offer for trespassing so long on your patience; but I felt a natural desire, if possible, to correct what I conceive to be a groundless imputation on the memory of my ancestor, before it shall come to be considered as a matter of history. That he was a man of violent passions and singular temper, I do not pretend to deny, as many traditions still current in this country amply verify; but that he was capable of forming a design to assassinate Montrose, the whole tenor of his former conduct and principles contradict. That he was obliged to join the opposite party, was merely a matter of safety, while Kilpont had so many powerful friends and connexions able and ready to avenge his death.

'I have only to add, that you have my full permission to make what use of this communication you please, and either to reject it altogether, or allow it such credit as you think it deserves; and I shall be ready at all times to furnish you with any further information on this subject which you may require, and which it may be in my power to afford.

'ARDVOIRLICH, 15*th January* 1830.'

The publication of a statement so particular, and probably so correct, is a debt due to the memory of James Stewart; the victim, it would seem, of his own violent passions, but perhaps incapable of an act of premeditated treachery.

ABBOTSFORD, 1*st August* 1830.

NOTES TO THE BLACK DWARF

Note 1. — Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham's 'nterpolations, p. 2

We have, in this and other instances, printed in italics some few words which the worthy editor, Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, seems to have interpolated upon the text of his deceased friend, Mr. Pattieson. We must observe, once for all, that such liberties seem only to have been taken by the learned gentleman where his own character and conduct are concerned; and surely he must be the best judge of the style in which his own character and conduct should be treated of.

Note 2. — The Black Dwarf, p. 4

The Black Dwarf, now almost forgotten, was once held a formidable personage by the dalesmen of the Border, where he got the blame of whatever mischief befell the sheep or cattle. 'He was,' says Dr. Leyden, who makes considerable use of him in the ballad called the 'Cout of Keeldar,' 'a fairy of the most malignant order — the genuine Northern Duergar.' The best and most authentic account of this dangerous and mysterious being occurs in a tale communicated to the author by that eminent antiquary, Richard Surtees, Esq., of Mainsforth, author of the *History of the Bishopric of Durham*.

According to this well-attested legend, two young Northumbrians were out on a shooting party, and had plunged deep among the mountainous moorlands which border on Cumberland. They stopped for refreshment in a little secluded dell by the side of a rivulet. There, after they had partaken of such food as they brought with them, one of the party fell asleep; the other, unwilling to disturb his friend's repose, stole silently out of the dell with the purpose of looking around him, when he was astonished to find himself close to a being who seemed not to belong to this world, as he was the most hideous dwarf that the sun had ever shone on. His head was of full human size, forming a frightful contrast with his height, which was considerably under four feet. It was thatched with no other covering than long matted red hair, like that of the fell of a bad[illegible]r in consistence, and in colour a reddish-brown, like the hue of the heath[illegible] blossom. His limbs seemed of great strength; nor was he otherwise deformed than from their undue proportion in thickness to his diminutive height. The terrified sportsman stood gazing on this horrible apparition until, with an angry countenance, the being demanded by what right he intruded himself on those hills and destroyed their harmless inhabitants. The perplexed stranger endeavoured to propitiate the incensed dwarf by offering to surrender his game, as he would to an earthly lord of the manor. The proposal only redoubled the offence already taken by the dwarf, who alleged that he was the lord of those mountains, and the protector of the wild creatures who found a retreat in their solitary recesses; and that all spoils derived from their death

or misery were abhorrent to him. The hunter humbled himself before the angry goblin, and by protestations of his ignorance, and of his resolution to abstain from such intrusion in future, at last succeeded in pacifying him. The gnome now became more communicative, and spoke of himself as belonging to a species of beings something between the angelic race and humanity. He added, moreover, which could hardly have been anticipated, that he had hopes of sharing in the redemption of the race of Adam. He pressed the sportsman to visit his dwelling, which he said was hard by, and plighted his faith for his safe return. But at this moment the shout of the sportsman's companion was heard calling for his friend, and the dwarf, as if unwilling that more than one person should be cognisant of his presence, disappeared as the young man emerged from the dell to join his comrade.

It was the universal opinion of those most experienced in such matters that, if the shooter had accompanied the spirit, he would, notwithstanding the dwarf's fair pretences, have been either torn to pieces or immured for years in the recesses of some fairy hill.

Such is the last and most authentic account of the apparition of the Black Dwarf.

Note 3. — The Reiver of Westburnflat, p. 40

This was in reality the designation of one of the last Border robbers, at least one of the last Scottish men who pursued that ancient occupation. He is probably placed about forty or fifty years too late by introducing him in the beginning of the 18th century. He is said to have been condemned to death at the last circuit of the Court of Justiciary which was held in the town of Selkirk. When the judge was about to pronounce sentence, the prisoner arose, and being a man of great strength broke asunder one of the benches, and, seizing on a fragment, was about to fight his way out of the court-house. But his companions in misfortune — for several persons had been convicted along with him — held his hands and implored him to permit them to die the death of Christians: and both he and they, agreeable to their decorous desire, had full honours of rope and gallows.

Westburnflat itself is situated on the small river or brook called Hermitage, not far from its junction with the Liddel. [See Introduction to 'Johnie Armstrong' in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. i.]

Note 4. — The Brouze, p. 45

The Brouze is a fashion not yet out of date at country bridals. The best-mounted gallants present gallop as fast as they can from the church to the bride's door, and the first who arrives gets a silk handkerchief or some such token. The name seems to be taken from the dish of brose with which he who won the race was anciently regaled.

Note 5. — Borderers in Flanders, p. 48

Walter, first Lord Scott of Buccleuch, carried a legion of Borderers to the wars of Flanders to assist the Prince of Orange against the Spaniard. They were welcomed to the country where war was raging, and their absence was felt as a relief in that where peace, from the union of the crowns, was become desirable.

Note 6. — Turner's Holm, p. 63

There is a level meadow, on the very margin of the two kingdoms, called Turner's Holm, just where the brook called Crissop joins the Liddel. It is

said to have derived its name as being a place frequently assigned for tourneys during the ancient Border times.

Note 7. — Pierced Lintel, p. 64

A similar tale is told about many a Border lintel. The blade, after having carved the freestone, is generally said to have so narrowly missed the person of the fugitive as to cut the points of his trunk hose. An example is shown on the upper lintel of the gate of the old castle at Drummelzier, impressed by the arm of Veitch of Dyock [Dawick].

Note 8. — Macpherson's Rant, p. 89

[The old ballad of 'Macpherson's Rant,' composed at the time of his execution, is printed in Herd's *Scottish Songs and Ballads*, vol. I. p. 99; but the lines here quoted are from Burns's version, beginning —

'Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong.']

Note 9. — Luck-in-a-Bag, p. 90

In confirmation of what is said concerning the Border Jacobites of inferior rank, the reader may consult what is said by the Reverend Mr. Patten concerning the cavalry of the Earl of Derwentwater in 1715. After giving some account of Captain Hunter and Captain Douglas, by each of whom a troop was levied, the historian adds:

'To this account of these two gentlemen I shall add, as a pleasant story, what one chose to remark upon them. When he heard that the former (Captain Hunter) was gone with his troop back into England, as was then given out, to take up quarters for the whole army, who were to follow and fall upon General Carpenter and his small and wearied troops, he said, "Let but Hunter and Douglas, with these men, quarter near Gen'al Carpenter, and I' faith they'll not leave them a horse to mount upon." His reason was supposed to be because these gentlemen, with their men, had been pretty well versed in horse stealing, or at least suspected as such. For an old Borderer was pleased to say, when he was informed that a great many, if not all, of the loose fellows and suspected horse stealers were gone into the Rebellion, "It's an ill wind blows nobody profit; for now," continued he, "I can leave my stable-door unlocked and sleep sound a' night's since Luck-in-a-Bag and the rest are gone to the wars."' — *History of the Late Rebellion*, by the Rev. Mr. Patten, 2d Edition, London, 1717, p. 63.

Note 10. — Captain Green, p. 94

This unfortunate mariner was commander of an armed vessel engaged in the East-Indian trade, called 'The Worcester.' He was seized at Edinburgh and tried before the Admiralty Court there for an alleged act of piracy committed on a vessel belonging to the Scottish Darien Company, called 'The Rising Sun,' the crew of which Green was said to have murdered, and plundered the cargo. He suffered death with two others of his crew for this alleged offence, of which he appears to have been innocent, and certainly was not convicted on credible evidence. [See *State Trials*, 1705, vol. xiv. — *Laing.*]

Note 11. — Pretender's Descent upon Scotland (1707), p. 97

The period of the novel corresponds to the spring of 1707, when an invasion by the Chevalier Saint George, at the head of an army of French auxiliaries, was universally expected, and when the greater part of Scotland, dissatisfied with the Union, was well content to have received the heir of the House of Stuart with open arms. The alert conduct of Admiral Sir George Byng, who followed the French squadron into the Firth of Forth, and the coldness and indifference of the French Commodore, Count Fourbin, who refused to suffer the Chevalier to disembark, lost an opportunity which was the most favourable to the restoration of the Stuart line that had occurred since the Revolution. While the French squadron was in the Forth the Jacobite gentlemen of Stirlingshire took arms as Ellieslaw's party are represented to have done; but, on learning that the flotilla was chased off the coast, they dispersed and returned to their homes. Stirling of Keir, Edmondstone of Newton, and other gentlemen, were tried for high treason: but, as no proof could be brought of any distinct or overt act of rebellion, or of their having other arms than swords and pistols, then generally worn by all travellers, they were acquitted for want of evidence.

NOTES TO A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

Note 1. — Morgenstern, p. 177

This was a sort of club or mace, used in the earlier part of the 17th century in the defence of breaches and walls. When the Germans insulted a Scotch regiment then besieged in Trailsund, saying they heard there was a ship come from Denmark to them laden with tobacco pipes, 'One of our soldiers,' says Colonel Robert Monro, 'showing them over the work a morgenstern, made of a large stock banded with iron, like the shaft of a halbert, with a round globe at the end with cross iron pikes, saith, "Here is one of the tobacco pipes, wherewith we will beat out your brains when ye intend to storm us." '

Note 2. — Colonisation of Lewis, p. 227

In the reign of James VI. an attempt of rather an extraordinary kind was made to civilise the extreme northern part of the Hebridean Archipelago. That monarch granted the property of the Island of Lewis, as if it had been an unknown and savage country, to a number of Lowland gentlemen, called undertakers, chiefly natives of the shire of Fife, that they might colonise and settle there. The enterprise was at first successful; but the natives of the island, MacLeods and MacKenzies, rose on the Lowland adventurers and put most of them to the sword.

Note 3. — Literal Prose Translation, p. 229

The admirers of pure Celtic antiquity, notwithstanding the elegance of the above translation, may be desirous to see a literal version from the original Gaelic, which we therefore subjoin; and have only to add that the original is deposited with Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham

Literal Translation

The hail-blast had drifted away upon the wings of the gale of autumn. The sun looked from between the clouds, pale as the wounded hero who rears his head feebly on the heath when the roar of battle hath passed over him.

Uncle, the Lady of the Castle, came forth to see her maidens pass to the herds with their leglins.

There sat an orphan maiden beneath the old oak-tree of appointment. The withered leaves fell around her, and her heart was more withered than they.

The parent of the ice [poetically taken for the frost] still congealed the

hail-drops in her hair; they were like the specks of white ashes on the twisted boughs of the blackened and half-consumed oak that blazes in the hall.

And the maiden said, 'Give me comfort, Lady, I am an orphan child.' And the Lady replied, 'How can I give that which I have not? I am the widow of a slain lord, the mother of a perished child. When I fled in my fear from the vengeance of my husband's foe, our bark was overwhelmed in the tide, and my infant perished. This was on St. Bridget's morn, near the strong Linns of Campsie. May ill-luck light upon the day.' And the maiden answered, 'It was on St. Bridget's morn, and twelve harvests before this time, that the fishermen of Campsie drew in their nets neither grilse nor salmon, but an infant half dead, who hath since lived in misery, and must die unless she is now aided.' And the Lady answered, 'Blessed be Saint Bridget and her morn, for these are the dark eyes and the falcon look of my slain lord; and thine shall be the inheritance of his widow.' And she called for her waiting attendants, and she bade them clothe that maiden in silk and in samite; and the pearls which they wove among her black tresses were whiter than the frozen hail-drops.

Note 4. — Fides et fiducia sunt relativa, p. 246

The military men of the times argued upon dependencies of honour as they called them, with all the metaphysical argumentation of civilians or school divines.

The English officer to whom Sir James Turner was prisoner after the rout at Uttoxeter demanded his parole of honour not to go beyond the walls of Hull without liberty. 'He brought me this message himself. I told him I was ready to do it, provided he removed his guards from me . . . for *fides et fiducia sunt relativa:* and, if he took my word for my fidelity, he was obliged to trust it, otherwise it was needless for him to seek it, and in vain for me to give it; and therefore I beseeched him either to give trust to my word, which I should not break, or to his own guards, who I supposed would not deceive him. In this manner I dealt with him, because I knew he was a scholar.'—Turner's *Memoirs*, p. 80. The English officer allowed the strength of the reasoning; but that concise reasoner, Cromwell, soon put an end to the dilemma: 'Sir James Turner must give his parole or be laid in irons.'

Note 5. — Baronial Espionage, p. 271

The precarious state of the feudal nobles introduced a great deal of espionage into their castles. Sir Robert Carey mentions his having put on the cloak of one of his own wardens to obtain a confession from the mouth of Geordie Bourne, his prisoner, whom he caused presently to be hanged in return for the frankness of his communication. The fine old Border castle of Naworth contains a private stair from the apartment of the Lord William Howard, by which he could visit the dungeon, as is alleged in chapter xiii. to have been practised by the Marquis of Argyle. [See *The Antiquary*, note 'Julian Avenel.']

Note 6. — Milton on the Scotch, p. 285

Milton's book, entitled *Tetrachordon*, had been ridiculed, it would seem, by the divines assembled at Westminster, and others, on account of the hardness of the title: and Milton in his sonnet retaliates upon the barbarous Scottish names which the Civil War had made familiar to English ears —

> Why is it harder, sirs, than Gordon,
> *Colkitto*, or Macdonnel, or Galasp?
> These rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek,
> That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.

'We may suppose,' says Bishop Newton, 'that these were persons of note among the Scotch ministers, who were for pressing and enforcing the Covenant': whereas Milton only intends to ridicule the barbarism of Scottish names in general, and quotes, indiscriminately, that of Gillespie, one of the Apostles of the Covenant, and those of Colkitto and M'Donnell (both belonging to one person), one of its bitterest enemies.

Note 7. — Baillie's *Letters*, p. 289

We choose to quote our authority for a fact so singular: —'A great many burgesses were killed, twenty-five householders in St. Andrews, many were bursten in the flight, and died without stroke.' — See Baillie's *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 92. — Edinburgh, 1775. In the Bannatyne Club edition, 1841, vol. ii. p. 262 (*Laing*).

Note 8. — Bows and Arrows, p. 297

In fact, for the admirers of archery it may be stated, not only that many of the Highlanders in Montrose's army used these antique missiles, but even in England the bow and quiver, once the glory of the bold yeomen of that land, were occasionally used during the great civil wars.

Note 9. — Wraiths, p. 307

A species of apparition, similar to what the Germans call a Double-Ganger, was believed in by the Celtic tribes, and is still considered as an emblem of misfortune or death. Mr. Kirk (see *Rob Roy*, p. 407), the minister of Aberfoil, who will no doubt be able to tell us more of the matter should he ever come back from Fairyland, gives us the following: —

'Some men of that exalted sight, whether by art or nature, have told me they have seen at these meetings a double man, or the shape of some man in two places, that is, a superterranean and a subterranean inhabitant perfectly resembling one another in all points, whom he, notwithstanding, could easily distinguish one from another by some secret tokens and operations, and so go speak to the man his neighbour and familiar, passing by the apparition or resemblance of him. They avouch that every element and different state of being have animals resembling those of another element, as there be fishes sometimes at sea resembling monks of late order in all their hoods and dresses, so as the Roman invention of good and bad demons and guardian angels particularly assigned is called by them one ignorant mistake, springing only from this original. They call this reflex man a co-walker, every way like the man, as a twin-brother and companion, haunting him as his shadow, as is oft seen and known among men (resembling the original) both before and after the original is dead, and was also often seen of old to enter a house, by which the people knew that the person of that likeness was to visit them within a few days. This copy, echo, or living picture goes at last to his own herd. It accompanied that person so long and frequently for ends best known to itself, whether to guard him from the secret assaults of some of its own folks, or only as an sportful ape to counterfeit all his actions.'—Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth*, p. 3.

The two following apparitions, resembling the vision of Allan M'Aulay in the text, occur in *Theophilus Insulanus* (Rev. Mr. Fraser's *Treatise on the Second Sight*, Relations x. and xxvii.)

'Barbara MacPherson, relict of the deceased Mr. Alexander MacLeod, late minister of St. Kilda, informed me the natives of that island have a particular kind of the second sight, which is always a forerunner of their approaching end. Some months before they sicken, they are haunted with

an apparition, resembling themselves in all respects as to their person, features, or clothing. This image (seemingly animated) walks with them in the fields in broad daylight; and if they are employed in delving, harrowing, seed-sowing, or any other occupation, they are at the same time mimicked by this ghostly visitant. My informer added further, that, having visited a sick person of the inhabitants, she had the curiosity to enquire of him, if at any time he had seen any resemblance of himself as above described; he answered in the affirmative, and told her that, to make further trial, as he was going out of his house in a morning, he put on straw-rope garters instead of those he formerly used, and having gone to the fields, his other self appeared in such garters. The conclusion was, the sick man died of that ailment, and she no longer questioned the truth of those remarkable presages.'

'Margaret MacLeod, an honest woman advanced in years, informed me that, when she was a young woman in the family of Grishirn..sh, a dairy-maid, who daily used to herd the calves in a park close to the house, observed, at different times, a woman resembling herself in shape and attire, walking solitarily at no great distance from her, and being surprised at the apparition, to make further trial, she put the back part of her upper garment foremost, and anon the phantom was dressed in the same manner, which made her uneasy, believing it portended some fatal consequence to herself. In a short time thereafter she was seized with a fever, which brought her to her end, but before her sickness and on her deathbed, declared the second sight to severals.'

Note 10. — Andrew M'Donald, p. 336

These verses of M'Donald's, given by the Author as a translation of a 'little Gaelic song,' occur as Air xxvii., with several verbal variations, in 'Love and Loyalty, an opera,' included in the posthumous volume entitled, *The Miscellaneous Works* of A. M'Donald, including the *Tragedy of Vimonda*, etc., Lond. 1791, 8vo. The author, Andrew M'Donald, was born at Leith, the son of George Donald, a gardener there, in the year 1755. He was educated at Edinburgh, and was ordained deacon in the Episcopal Church of Scotland by Bishop Forbes in 1775. At this time he prefixed Mac to his name, and two years later had the charge of a chapel near Glasgow, but owing to some disputes he left that city, and devoted himself to literature, first at Edinburgh and latterly — to follow out his theatrical speculations — in London, where he died in great poverty at Kentish Town, 23d August 1790, 'falling a victim, at the age of thirty-five, to sickness, disappointment and misfortune.' (*Laing.*)

GLOSSARY

TO

THE BLACK DWARF AND A LEGEND OF MONTROSE

ABIDE, to put up with

ABULYIEMENTS, obsolete Scottish form of habiliments

ABUNE, above

AE, one

AIRN, iron

AITH, oath

ALLE OUTER(N) GEISTER, etc. (p. 188), All good spirits, praise the Lord

ALLENARLY, solely

ANDREW FERRARA, a basket-hilted broadsword

ANGUS-SHIRE, Forfarshire

A TRES BON MARCHÉ, at small cost, a cheap rate

AUGHT, act guardian to, can claim

AULD ANE, Old Nick, the devil

AUT QUOCUNQUE, etc. (p. 242), or whatever other title you enjoy

BANDERS, confederates

BAND-STANE, large stone stretching from side to side of a wall

BA'-SPEIL, football match

BASTO, the ace of clubs in l'ombre and some other card-games

BATHIAN. *See* Stephen Bathian

BATOONS, baton

BAUDRONS, a pet name for the cat

BAWBEE, a halfpenny

BEAL, a narrow pass

BEDAMAR, a minor conspirator in Otway's *Venice Preserved*

BELLENDEN BANNER, the banner of the Scotts or Buccleuchs, from Bellendean, one of their possessions on the upper Borthwick Water, west of Hawick

BENT, the open field, open country

BENYIEGLO, or BEN-Y-GLOE, a mountain overlooking Glen Tilt in the north of Perthshire

BESO A USTED LOS MANOS, I kiss my hands to your honour

BETHLEN GABOR, that is, Gabriel Bethlen, ruler of Transylvania from 1613 to 1629

BICKER, wooden bowl, cup

BIDE, to wait, remain, await, stay

BIEN, comfortable, well provided for

BIG, to build; BIGGING, building

BILLIE, brother, comrade

BIRL, to turn, cause to whirr

BISOGNOS, raw, undisciplined recruits

BLACK DOG'S THROAT, BUTTER OUT OF. *See* Butter, etc.

BLACK DOUGLAS, Good Sir James, the staunch supporter of Bruce

BLINK, a moment, instant

BLYTHE, happy, glad

BOBADIL, a military braggart in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*

BODLE, ⅓th penny

BOGILLY, haunted by hobgoblins

BOGLE, hobgoblin, ghost

BON CAMARADO, a good, trusty comrade

BONUS SOCIUS, a trusty, faithful comrade

BOOK-LEAR, book learning

BORDER LAW. *See* Scott's *Provincial Antiquities*, p. 116, and several passages in George Ridpath's *Border History* (1776 and 1848)

BORE, a hole

BOTHY, a Highland hut

BOUK, bulk, body

BRAW, brave, grand

BROGUES, Highland shoes or moccasins

BROKEN HIGHLANDMEN, men who belong to no clan, outlaws

BROWN-BILL, a sort of halberd, painted brown, carried by private soldiers and watchmen

BURROW-TOWN, BORROWSTOUN, a royal borough

BUTTER OUT OF A BLACK DOG'S THROAT, a proverbial expression for something that is irrecoverable

BY, or BYE, besides, above (excepting); BY ORDINAR, out of the common

CASUALACS, casualties

CÆTERIS PARIBUS, other things being equal

CALABALERO, or CABALERO, cavalier, gentleman

CALCAVELLA, a sweet white wine, made at Carcavelhos in Portugal

CALLANT, a lad

CAMARADO, a comrade, the equal of

CAMISADE, a night attack

CANTRIP, a freak, trick

CAPLERFAE, or CABERFAE, the Earl of Seaforth

CAREY, MR. ROBERT. It is Thomas Carew who is meant, and the poem is entitled *Elegy upon the Death of Dr. Donne*

CARLE, fellow

CARLINE, old woman

CAROCCO, probably CARAJO, a coarse Spanish exclamation

CARY, SIR ROBERT, author of *Memoirs*, died in 1639

CASUS IMPROVISUS, unforeseen occurrence, case

CATERAN, Highland robber

CATRAIL, a strange boundary ditch, seemingly designed to defend the Gaelic or Celtic portion of the south of Scotland against the invasions of the Saxons

CAUTELOUS, cautious

CAVEY, hen-coop

CESS, the land-tax

CHAMADE, a signal by drum or trumpet, inviting to a parley

CHARE, to perform, do

CHEAT-THE-WOODIE, Cheat-the-gallows, gallows-bird

CHIELD, a fellow

CLAIRSHACH, a small Highland harp

CLAM, VI, VEL PRECARIO, by stealth or violence or request

CLANJAMFRIE, tag-rag and bobtail, rabble, promiscuous company

CLAVERS, gossip, nonsense

CLEUGH, a ravine

CLEWED UP, coiled, rolled up

CLOOT, hoof, head of cattle

CORPORAL OATH, an oath strengthened by touching a sacred object, as the corporal or linen altar-cloth used at the celebration of the Eucharist

CORPS DE LOGIS, the main block of buildings

CORRAGIO! courage!

COUNTRY KEEPER, a sort of police officer of the Borders

COUROULTAI, undoubtedly a corruption of the Gaelic *comhairle tighe*, a house or clan council. Note *kuriltai*, the assembly of notables amongst the Mongols

CRACK, to converse in a lively way; CRACKS, talk, chatter

CRAVATS, a vulgar name for Croats, light cavalry recruited chiefly amongst the Slavonic Croats. In France in the 17th century the name was given to light horsemen equipped similar to the Croats

CREISH, grease

CRENELLES, loopholes in an embattlement or parapet

CREUTZER, a German copper coin, worth ½d penny

CROUSE, brisk, confident

CULLION, a despicable fellow, coward, poltroon

CUMBRAIK, Cumberland

CURCH, a kerchief, head-covering

CURNIE, a band, company

CYNTHIUS AUREM VELLIT, Apollo twitched my ear

DAFFING, frolicking

DAFT, crazy

DAMNUM FATALE, a fatal injury

DEAVING, deafening with clamour

DEIL'S BUCKIE, imp of Satan

DIEM CLAUSIT SUPREMUM, his last day is come

DING, to cuff about

DIONYSIUS, the Elder, the tyrant or ruler of ancient Syracuse

DIRDUM, damage, disagreeable consequences

DOIT, an old Scottish coin, worth ⅓th penny; also a Dutch coin worth half a farthing

DOOMS, confoundedly, very

DOOR-CHEEK, door-post

DOORP, or DORP, a village

DOUCE, sober, quiet

DOUGHTNA, could not

DOUR, stubborn, obstinate

DOURLACH, quiver; literally, satchel (of arrows)

DOWNA, do not like; DOWNA DO MAIR THAN THEY DOW, cannot do more than they have power to do

DUNG, knocked about, driven

DUNKLESPIEL, is Dünkelsbühl, a town on the borders of Bavaria and Würtemberg

EARSE, or ERSE, Gaelic, the native language of the Highlanders

EBRIUS, intoxicated, tipsy

EEN, eyes

EHEU, alas!

EILDING, fuel

EITHNIK, or ETHNIC, heathenish, pagan

ENEUCH, ENEUGH, ENOW, enough

EX CONTRARIO, on the other hand, on the contrary

EXPEDITUS, without encumbrance

FACTIONARIES, partizans

FAHN-DRAGGER, an ancient or ensign

FARL, fourth part

FARY, very

FASH, trouble

FASTERN'S E'EN, Shrove Tuesday

FAUR'D, favoured; ILL-FAUR'D, ugly

FETTERLOCK, leg shackles

FIAR, one who holds the reversion of property

FIENT O' ME, a strong negative

FIERY CROSS, the signal summoning the clansmen to arms. *See Lady of the Lake*, canto iii.

FINLAND CUIRASSIERS. Finland was an integral part of Sweden down to 1809

FIT, foot; MAKE MAIR FIT, move on faster

FLAGRANTE BELLO, etc. (p. 324), whilst war is raging fierce, much more amid the din of battle

FLAM, a sudden puff of wind, deception, lie

FLIEGENDEN MERCOEUR, the Flying Mercury

FLOW-MOSS, morass

FLUNG, disappointed, deceived

FLYTE, scold, quarrel

FORBYE, besides, except

FOREHAMMER, a sledge hammer

FORFEND, forbid, prevent

FORFOUGHTEN, breathless, exhausted

FOR, full

FOUSSEE, a fosse, ditch

FRANKFORT, on the Oder, was stormed by Gustavus on 3d April 1631

FREYGRAF, a count of the Holy Roman (German) Empire

FURCIFER, scoundrel, rascal

GANG, go

GANZ FORTREFLICH (FOR TREFFLICH), most excellent

GAR, to make, oblige, etc.

GARIOCH, a district of Aberdeenshire

GASCONADING, boasting, bragging

GASH, shrewd, sagacious

GATE, GAIT, way, mode, direction

GATHERING PEAT, the piece of turf left to keep the fire alive

GEAR, property

GELT, or GELD, money

GIFF-GAFF, one good turn deserves another, in old English *ku me, ku thee*, mutually serving one another
GIMMER, a two-year old ewe
GIN, if
GIRD, a girth
GIRDLE, a toasting-plate
GIRNEL-KIST, corn-bin
GLIFF, an instant
GOWD, gold
GOWK, a fool
GOWPEN, a handful
GRAITH, furniture, 'arness
GRAND PENSIONARY OF AMSTERDAM, the State Secretary of the province of Holland is meant
GRANE, groan
GRASSMARKET, the old market place, and the place of public execution, in Edinburgh
GREET, to cry, weep
GREWSOME, frightful, grim
GRICE, a sucking pig
GROTIUS, the celebrated Dutch writer on *The Laws of Peace and War* (1625)
GRUMACH, ill-favoured, ugly
GUDE, good
GUDE-DAME, grandmother
GUIDE, to treat well or ill, manage
GUTHRIE, or GUTHRY, Bishop, in his *Memoirs* (1702)

HA', hall
'HAD YOU SEEN BUT THESE ROADS,' etc., the inscription on an obelisk near Fort William. *See* Burt's *Letters*, Letter xxvi.
HAIL-DROPS, shot-corns
HALBERD, TO RECEIVE A, to serve as a common soldier
HALE, HAIL, HAILL, whole
HALLOWE'EN, Burns' poem; HALLOWE'EN NUTS were used in making certain divinations on Hallowe'en
HANTLE, a good many
HAR'ST, harvest
HEAD OF THE SOW TO THE TAIL OF THE GRICE (sucking pig), to take the good with the bad
HEADS AND THRAWS. *See* Thraws
HEART OF MIDLOUDEN, the ancient jail of Edinburgh
HEIRSHIP, or HERSHIP, plundering, devastation
HELLICAT, a ruffian, wicked creature
HENKER! hangman: WHAT THE HENKER, what the deuce!
HEPBURN, SIR JOHN, held high command under Gustavus Augustus till 1632, afterwards under Louis XIII. of France
HERRY, harry
HET, hot
HEYDUK, a peculiar class of Hungarian militia, light foot-soldiers; POLONIAN HEYDUK, Polish light infantry soldier
HEYS, dancing steps
HIE, high
HIGH DUTCH, that is, HOCH DEUTSCH, the modern classical German
HINNY, honey, an affectionate mode of address
HIRDIE-GIRDIE, topsy-turvy, quite confused
HIRPLE, to halt, walk as if lame
HOGANMOGANS, the Dutch, the word being a corruption of Hoog en Mogend (High and Mighty), the style used in addressing the States General of the Netherlands
HOMOLOGATE, to approve, ratify, sanction
HORAM THE SON OF ASMAR, the hero of Sir Chas. Morell's (Jas. Ridley's) *Life of Horam, the Son of Asmar*, in H. W. Weber's *Tales of the East* (1812)
HOWE, a hoe
HUMMING (BEER), strong beer that causes a humming in the head. Metheglin (and so beer) was said to make the head hum like the hive from which the honey of the metheglin was taken
HURCHIN, hedgehog
HURLEY HOUSE, a large house nearly ruinous

I(O)LMKILL, Iona, the sacred island of the ancient Celtic Church
ILK, ILKA, each, every, same
IMAUM, the officer who recites the prayers in a Mohammedan mosque
IMPEDITUS, with encumbrance
INGAN, onion
IN NOMINE DOMINI, in the name of the Lord
INTER POCULA, over one's cups
INTROMIT, to interfere with
I PR.E. SEQUAR, go on, I will follow
IRISH ENGINEER OFFICER, Captain Burt, author of *Letters from the North of Scotland*
ITHACUS, Homer's hero, Odysseus
IVY-TOD, ivy-bush

JAFFEIR AND PIERRE, chief conspirators in Otway's *Venice Preserved*
JANIZARIES, the soldiers of the Sultan, mostly Servians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, carried off in boyhood and forcibly converted to Mohammedanism
JEDDART, Jedburgh
JEROBOAM, a large bowl or goblet; the liquor it held
JOCK OF THE SIDE. *See* Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*, vol. ii. p. 76
JOOKERY-PAUKERY, trickery, juggery
JOW, to toll a large bell by moving the tongue by hand
JUS GENTIUM, the law of nations
JUSTIFIED, executed

KAIL, broth made of greens
KEB, to miscarry (said of ewes)
KENN'D, known
KENT, a long staff
KILT, to tuck up; KILT AWA', carry off
KING'S KEYS, an axe and crowbar
KIRSCHENWASSER, cherry-brandy
KIST, chest
KNAPSCAP, or KNAPSCULL, a headpiece, helmet
KNOWE, knoll
KYE, kine
KYLE, a strait

LAIR, LEAR, learning
LAITH, loth
LAMITER, one that is lame
LANCE-SPESSADE, OR ANSPERSADE, an inferior officer; a picked soldier of the company
LANDLAUFER, LANDLOUPER, vagabond, adventurer
LANG NEBBIT THINGS, long-nosed creatures of supernatural origin
LANG SHEEP, sheep with long wool; the black-faced breed have short wool
LANZKNECHT, a German mercenary soldier
LAP, leaped
LAVE, remainder, the rest
LAW'S BANK, a national bank founded at Paris in 1718, for the issue of bank-notes, by John Law, who planned the Mississippi scheme

Leaguer lady, lass, a female camp-follower or courtesan

Led farm, farm at which the tenant does not reside

Leglin, a milk-pail

Leib-Regiment, Life Guards

Leipsic. Here, or rather at Breitenfeld, near Leipsic, Gustavus Adolphus routed Tilly on 7th September 1631, and the Swedish general Torstenson defeated the Imperialists on 2d November 1642

Leslie, Sir Ludovick, sometime governor of Berwick and Tynmouth-Shields; he fought during the Civil War in both England and Scotland

Lesmahagow, in Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*

Letters to the Elect Ladies. Possibly Miss Edgeworth's *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795)—the dates agree well enough

Lift, to lift up the coffin, as a signal to begin the funeral ceremonies

Lifter, cattle-stealer

Linns of Campsie, a waterfall in the River Tay in Cargill, Perthshire. *See* a note to *Fair Maid of Perth*

Lippen, to trust to

Loaning, a lane between stone walls

Lochaber axe, a variety of halbert, with a long shaft, surmounted by a bill-like blade backed by a large hook

Logicé, by logic

Loon, a fellow, rascal, common man

Loup, leap

Louping-ill, a sort of paralytic disease that attacks sheep, causing them to leap up and down when they move

Low, a flame

Lowdens, the Lothians, *i. e.* the counties of Edinburgh, Haddington, and Linlithgow

Luckpenny, a small sum returned to the buyer as luck for his purchase

Lug, the ear; a handle

Lumsdell. Presumably Lumsden, Colonel Sir James, sometime governor of Newcastle, and major-general in the Scottish wars

Lunt, anything used for lighting a fire, a torch, match

Lupton, Daniel, more correctly Donald Lupton, his book being *A Warlike Treatise of the Pike*, London, 1642

Lutzen, the bloody fight in which Gustavus fell, after defeating Wallenstein, on 16th November 1632

Lymmaris, or limmers, scoundrels

MacIan, a sept of the Macdonalds

Mackenzie, Murdoch. In *Monro, his Expedition*, pp. 75, 76, the names are printed Murdo MacClaude (MacLeod) and Allen Tough

Mains, the home farm, farm attached to the manor-house

Mair by token, besides, especially

Mair fit, more speed

Mammocks, morsels, fragments

Marai, the sacred inclosures of the natives of Otaheite or Tahiti

Maravedi, an old Spanish coin, worth less than a farthing

March dyke, or dike, a boundary wall

March of Brandenburg. Brandenburg (Prussia) was for a long time a frontier province (march) of the German Empire

Marriage, a novel by Miss Ferrier

Maun, must; **mauna**, must not

Mea paupera regna, my poor realms

Mearns, an old name for Kincardineshire

Melder, the quantity of meal ground at the mill at one time

Merk, 1s. 1½d.

Mickle, muckle, much, big

Middenstead, the manure-heap, dunghill

Mim, affectedly modest, quiet

Misken, not to know

Mislippen, to suspect

Misset, put out, perturb

Mistryst, to alarm; fail to keep an appointment or rendezvous

Moor-ill, a disease of black cattle, in which a virulent blister is formed near the root of the tongue

Moor-pouts, young moorfowl

Morning, a morning dram

Mort, skin of a sheep or lamb that has died of disease

Moss, morass

Moss-trooper, a Border raider

Movit, Ajacem, etc. (p. 332), Ajax, son of Telamon, was subdued by the beauty of Tecmessa, his captive maid

Neb, nose

Nerling, must be Nordlingen, where on 27th August 1634 the Swedish infantry under Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar and General Horn were all but annihilated by the Imperialists

Neuk, nook, corner

Nicker, to giggle, laugh loudly

Non compos mentis, insane

Non eget Mauris, etc. (p. 281), Fuscus needs no Moorish darts, or bow, or quiver filled with poisoned arrows

Nullum vitæ genus, etc. (p. 154), there is no baser line of life than theirs who sell their swords regardless of the cause

Numidians. *See* Quivered Numidians

Nuremberg, the murderous attempt of Gustavus to storm Wallenstein's entrenched camp near Nuremberg, in the summer of 1632

Old Willie, probably William III.

O'Neale. *See* Sir Phelim

Onstead, farm building, farmstead

Opiferque per orbem dicor, throughout the world I am esteemed a helper

Outbye, out of doors; **out bye land**, outlying parts of a farm

Overcrowed and slighted, dominated, commanded

Owerby, a little way off

Ower far in, too intimate

Panada, bread boiled in water, then sweetened and flavoured

Pandours, irregular Hungarian light-armed soldiery

PANNONIA, the Roman name of the region lying between the Danube and the Save
PAR ACCIDENS, incidentally
PARTAN, a crab
PATIENZA! patience!
PEEL, PELE, a place of strength, a Border tower of refuge
PENGIN, whining
PEOHTS, the name given by the common people of Scotland to the ancient Picts
PELOTON, a platoon, a small company of soldiers drawn out of the ranks for special service
PEN-GUN, a penguin; TO CRACK LIKE A PEN-GUN, to very loquacious
PERDUE, in concealment
PEREMPTORIE, to the point
PERUVIANS. When they first saw the Spanish knights, they took man and horse for one creature
PINCH, an iron crowbar, lever
PIPE-STAPLE, stalk of a tobacco pipe
PIT, put; PIT OWER, say over, repeat
PLACK, ½d penny; PLACK AND BAWBEE, every penny of it, the last penny
POCK-PUDDING, a Scotchman's term of contempt for an Englishman
POW, the head
PRINCE LEOPOLD OF WITTELSBACH, a member of the dynasty or house that still rules over Bavaria
PROVANT, the regular army rations
PU', to pull
PULDRONS, or PAULDRONS, separate pieces of armour to protect the shoulders

QUÆ QUÆSTUM CORPORIBUS FACIEBANT, who made gain by prostituting their bodies
QUEICH, QUAICH, drinking-cup made of staves hooped together
QUIVERED NUMIDIANS, the Numidians were celebrated archers

RAE, a roe
RANT, merry-making
RASP HOUSE, house of detention, prison
RASSELAS, Dr. Johnson's book
REDD, to advise
REDE, advice, counsel
RED WUD, stark mad
REEK, smoke
REESTED, smoke-dried
REIFTS, robberies, plunderings
REIVER, robber, rover
RIDING BLOOD, love of war or fighting
RIZPAH THE DAUGHTER OF AIAH, the concubine of Saul
RIZZERED, grilled, dried in the sun
ROOD-DAY, 25th September
ROUGHS, that is, Highlanders

SAE, so
SAIN, to bless
SAIR, sore, greatly
SALVAGE, savage, uncivilised
SANTISSIMA MADRE DI DIOS, Most holy Mother of God
SARK, BATTLE OF, where in 1448 the Earls of Douglas and Ormond defeated the English
SASSENACH, Saxon, that is, a Lowlander or English man
SAULIE, a funeral mute
SCAUR, a crag, bluff
SCLATE, slate
SCOMFISH, suffocate, stifle
SCONCE, a detached outwork, block-house
SCOUTHER, a scorching, toasting
SCRAUGH, screech, shriek
SEANNACHIE, a Highland bard or genealogist
SEMPLE, common
SERAGLIO, the palace of the Sultan of the Turks
SHAMOY, chamois
SHAW, the woods
SHEELING, SHIELING, a Highland hut
SHEELING HILL, the winnowing mound, where grain was separated from the chaff by hand in the open air
SHELLED, covered with shell; poured, scattered
SHELTY, a very small horse
SHIEL PEACODS, to shell peas
SHOEING-HORN, anything that allures, encourages, helps
SHOON, shoes
SIC, SICCAN, such
SIDIER, a soldier
SI FAS SIT DICERE, if it be permissible to say so
SIGNIFER, a standard-bearer, ensign
SINE NOMINE TURBA, the nameless (obscure) crowd
SINSYNE, since then
SIR PHELIM O'NEALE, or O'NEIL, the leader of the Irish Rebellion of 1641, when Charles I. raised a force of 9000 wild Irish Papists for the invasion of Scotland
SKAITH, SCATHE, to harm, injure; injury, damage, loss
SKEEL, skill
SKELPING, galloping, racing
SKIANACH, a man of Skye
SKIRLING, screaming
SKREIGH O' MORNING, dawn, daybreak
SLED, a wheel-less cart
SMEEKIT, smoked to death
SNAPPER, to stumble
SOFT ROAD, a road through quagmires and bogs. Soft weather is very rainy weather
SOLDADO, mercenary or professional soldier
SOOTH SIDE OF THE JEST, jest verging too close on the truth
SORNING, begging with threats, spunging on
SORT, to suit, agree
SPADILLE, the ace of spades in l'ombre and some other card-games
SPANHEIM, meant for Spandau, which Gustavus occupied in 1631
SPEER, to inquire; SPEERINGS, tidings
SPLORE, a noisy frolic or quarrel
SPONTOON, or half pike, the weapon carried by commissioned officers
STEEK, to shut
STEER, to molest, touch
STELL, to plant or mount cannon
STEPHEN BATHIAN, or BATHORI, waged war against Moscow during the years 1578-82
STIEVE, firm
STIFT, bishopric, bailiwick
STIRK, a steer
STIVER, an old Dutch coin worth about 1d.
STOCKING, farm stock
STOOP AND ROOP, utterly, root and branch
STOOPED, swooped down upon, said of a bird of prey
STORM-CLOCK, a corruption of *sturm-glocke*, an alarm-bell
STOT, a bullock
STOUP, a flagon, vessel for holding liquor
STOUTH, theft; STOUTHRIFE, robbery with violence
STRAPADO, a military punishment, in which the offender was drawn to a

certain height and suddenly let fall, the jerk causing great pain
STREEK, to stretch
STRIENT, an obsolete form of strait, difficulty
SUCCEDANEUM, substitute
SWATTER, to move quickly and noisily through water, etc.
SWEAR, reluctant, unwilling

TAM O' WHITTRAM, presumably a descendant of Old Sim of Whittram, a notable Border raider of Elizabeth's reign. *See Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. i. p. 394
TAPPIT HEN, a pewter measure which contained three quarts of claret. *See Guy Mannering*, Note 9, p. 429
TARRAS, a stream in Dumfriesshire
TASKER, labourer who does piece-work, generally the threshing of corn
TASS, a glass, cup
TAUSEND TEUFLEN! (TEUFELN), thousand devils!
THAGUES, undisciplined Irishmen
THIENDRUM, or TYNDRUM, in the parish of Killin, in the west of Perthshire
TENT, to probe
TERTIA, a regiment
TETERRIMA CAUSA, the hideous cause
TEUGH, tough
THANE, earl
THRAW, to twist, contradict; THRAWN, contradictory
THRAWS, HEADS AND, when the feet of a man rest next the head of the man who lies beside him, and so on alternately
THREEP, to maintain stoutly, assert
TIEFENBACH, an imperial general who commanded in Bohemia and Silesia in 1631
TIERNACH, chief, the laird or squire
TINKLER, a tinker
TITTIES, an affectionate diminutive for sisters
TOD, bush; fox
TOLBOOTH, the jail
TOOM, empty
TOUGH, DONALD. *See* Mackenzie, Murdoch
TOUN, the farm-steading with its dependent houses
TOUR DE PASSE, trick of legerdemain, conjuring
TOW, rope
TRAILSUND, is Stralsund, on the Baltic coast of Pomerania, which, in 1628, defied all the efforts of Wallenstein
TRASH'D, jaded
TREWSMAN, a clansman, Highlander
TUCK, beat
TUILZIE, scuffle, skirmish
TUP, a ram
TURNER, SIR JAMES. *See* a note to *Old Mortality*
TURPES PERSONÆ, base characters
TWA, TWASOME, two

UNCE, ounce
UNCO, uncommon, strange
UN PEU CLAIRVOYANT, somewhat observant
UNTENTY, inattentive, awkward
UPBYE, up the way, up yonder
UPCOME, IF ALL BE GOOD THAT IS, if his actions answer expectations
UPHAUD, maintain, insist
USQUEBAUGH, whisky

VELT-MARESCHAL BANNIER, the celebrated Swedish general, Field-Marshal Banér
VINO CIBOQUE GRAVATUS, overcome with feasting
VIVERS, victuals
VOQUE LA GALÈRE! let come what may!
VOLE, a deal at cards that draws all the tricks
VOLTE-FACE, about face
VOTO A DIOS, a menacing oath

WAD, a pledge; would
WADSET, mortgage, bond
WAE, WOE; SORRY
WALTER BUTLER, the man who assassinated the great Wallenstein
WAME, belly, stomach
WARE, to spend
WARLOCK, wizard
WATER-SAPS, bread steeped in water, sops
WAUKEN, waken
WAUR, WARSE, worse
WEARY FA', a curse on — an imprecation
WEIRD, destiny
WEIZE, to direct, aim
WERBEN, near the Elbe in Brandenburg (PRUSSIA). Thore Gustavus made a fortified camp, which was unsuccessfully assailed by Tilly on 26th July 1631
WHAUP, curlew
WHEEN, a few
WHIDDIN' BACK AND FORRIT, moving quickly backward and forwards
WHIGAMORES, a contemptuous name for the Presbyterians in the south-west of Scotland
WHINGER, a hanger, sword
WIN AT, THROUGH, to get at, through
WOLGAST, CASTLE OF, on the Baltic coast of Pomerania, where the body of Gustavus Adolphus lay embalmed after the battle of Lützen, until it was taken to Sweden
WOO, wool
WOODEN MARE, a wooden frame on which soldiers were made to ride as a punishment. *See* a note to *Old Mortality*
WORRICOW, hobgoblin
WOWF, crazed
WUD, mad
WUSS, to wish
WYTE, blame

YAUD, an old mare
YETT, a gate
YOWES, ewes

ZOILUS, a grammarian, noted for the severity of his criticisms upon Homer

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THE

WAVERLEY NOVELS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT

VOLUME VIII

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR

TALES OF MY LANDLORD

Third Series

Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's,
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede ye tent it;
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,
An' faith he'll prent it!

BURNS.

Ahora bien, dixo il Cura, traedme, senor huésped, aquesos libros, que los quiero ver. Que me place, respondió el, y entrando en su aposento, sacó dél una maletilla vieja cerrada con una cadenilla, y abriéndola halló en ella tres libros grandes y unos papeles de muy buena letra escritos de mano. — DON QUIXOTE, Parte I. Capitulo xxxii.

It is mighty well, said the priest; pray, landlord, bring me those books, for I have a mind to see them. With all my heart, answered the host; and going to his chamber, he brought out a little old cloke-bag, with a pedlock and chain to it, and opening it, he took out three large volumes, and some manuscript papers written in a fine character. — JARVIS'S *Translation.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR

THE Author, on a former occasion,[1] declined giving the real source from which he drew the tragic subject of this history, because, though occurring at a distant period, it might possibly be unpleasing to the feelings of the descendants of the parties.[2] But as he finds an account of the circumstances given in the Notes to Law's *Memorials*,[3] by his ingenious friend, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., and also indicated in his reprint of the Rev. Mr. Symson's poems appended to the *Description of Galloway*, as the original of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, the Author feels himself now at liberty to tell the tale as he had it from connexions of his own, who lived very near the period, and were closely related to the family of the bride.

It is well known that the family of Dalrymple, which has produced, within the space of two centuries, as many men of talent, civil and military, and of literary, political, and professional eminence, as any house in Scotland, first rose into distinction in the person of James Dalrymple, one of the most eminent lawyers that ever lived, though the labours of his powerful mind were unhappily exercised on a subject so limited as Scottish jurisprudence, on which he has composed an admirable work.

He married Margaret, daughter to Ross of Balniel, with whom he obtained a considerable estate. She was an able, politic, and high-minded woman, so successful in what she undertook, that the vulgar, no way partial to her husband or her family, imputed her success to necromancy. According to the popular belief,

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[1] See Introduction to the *Chronicles of the Canongate*.
[2] See The Family of Stair. Note 1.
[3] Law's *Memorials*, p. 226.

this Dame Margaret purchased the temporal prosperity of her family from the Master whom she served under a singular condition, which is thus narrated by the historian of her grandson, the great Earl of Stair: — 'She lived to a great age, and at her death desired that she might not be put under ground, but that her coffin should be placed upright on one end of it, promising that while she remained in that situation the Dalrymples should continue in prosperity. What was the old lady's motive for such a request, or whether she really made such a promise, I cannot take upon me to determine; but it is certain her coffin stands upright in the isle of the church of Kirkliston, the burial-place of the family.'[1] The talents of this accomplished race were sufficient to have accounted for the dignities which many members of the family attained, without any supernatural assistance. But their extraordinary prosperity was attended by some equally singular family misfortunes, of which that which befell their eldest daughter was at once unaccountable and melancholy.

Miss Janet Dalrymple, daughter of the first Lord Stair and Dame Margaret Ross, had engaged herself without the knowledge of her parents to the Lord Rutherford, who was not acceptable to them either on account of his political principles or his want of fortune. The young couple broke a piece of gold together, and pledged their troth in the most solemn manner; and it is said the young lady imprecated dreadful evils on herself should she break her plighted faith. Shortly after, a suitor who was favoured by Lord Stair, and still more so by his lady, paid his addresses to Miss Dalrymple. The young lady refused the proposal, and being pressed on the subject, confessed her secret engagement. Lady Stair, a woman accustomed to universal submission, for even her husband did not dare to contradict her, treated this objection as a trifle, and insisted upon her daughter yielding her consent to marry the new suitor, David Dunbar, son and heir to David Dunbar of Baldoon, in Wigtonshire. The first lover, a man of very high spirit, then interfered by letter, and insisted on the right he had acquired by his troth plighted with the young lady. Lady Stair sent him for answer, that her daughter, sensible of her undutiful behaviour in entering into a contract unsanctioned by her parents, had retracted her unlawful vow, and now refused to fulfil her engagement with him.

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[1] *Memoirs of John Earl of Stair*, by an Impartial Hand. London, printed for C. Cobbet, p. 1.

The lover, in return, declined positively to receive such an answer from any one but his mistress in person; and as she had to deal with a man who was both of a most determined character and of too high condition to be trifled with, Lady Stair was obliged to consent to an interview between Lord Rutherford and her daughter. But she took care to be present in person, and argued the point with the disappointed and incensed lover with pertinacity equal to his own. She particularly insisted on the Levitical law, which declares that a woman shall be free of a vow which her parents dissent from. This is the passage of Scripture she founded on: —

'If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

'If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;

'And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

'But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.' — Numbers xxx. 2–5.

While the mother insisted on these topics, the lover in vain conjured the daughter to declare her own opinion and feelings. She remained totally overwhelmed, as it seemed — mute, pale, and motionless as a statue. Only at her mother's command, sternly uttered, she summoned strength enough to restore to her plighted suitor the piece of broken gold which was the emblem of her troth. On this he burst forth into a tremendous passion, took leave of the mother with maledictions, and as he left the apartment, turned back to say to his weak, if not fickle, mistress, 'For you, madam, you will be a world's wonder'; a phrase by which some remarkable degree of calamity is usually implied. He went abroad, and returned not again. If the last Lord Rutherford was the unfortunate party, he must have been the third who bore that title, and who died in 1685.

The marriage betwixt Janet Dalrymple and David Dunbar of Baldoon now went forward, the bride showing no repugnance, but being absolutely passive in everything her mother commanded or advised. On the day of the marriage, which, as was

then usual, was celebrated by a great assemblage of friends and relations, she was the same — sad, silent, and resigned, as it seemed, to her destiny. A lady, very nearly connected with the family, told the Author that she had conversed on the subject with one of the brothers of the bride, a mere lad at the time, who had ridden before his sister to church. He said her hand, which lay on his as she held her arm round his waist, was as cold and damp as marble. But, all of his new dress and the part he acted in the procession, the circumstance, which he long afterwards remembered with bitter sorrow and compunction, made no impression on him at the time.

The bridal feast was followed by dancing. The bride and bridegroom retired as usual, when of a sudden the most wild and piercing cries were heard from the nuptial chamber. It was then the custom, to prevent any coarse pleasantry which old times perhaps admitted, that the key of the nuptial chamber should be entrusted to the brideman. He was called upon, but refused at first to give it up, till the shrieks became so hideous that he was compelled to hasten with others to learn the cause. On opening the door, they found the bridegroom lying across the threshold, dreadfully wounded, and streaming with blood. The bride was then sought for. She was found in the corner of the large chimney, having no covering save her shift, and that dabbled in gore. There she sat grinning at them, mopping and mowing, as I heard the expression used, in a word, absolutely insane. The only words she spoke were, 'Tak up your bonny bridegroom.' She survived this horrible scene little more than a fortnight, having been married on the 24th of August, and dying on the 12th of September 1669.

The unfortunate Baldoon recovered from his wounds, but sternly prohibited all inquiries respecting the manner in which he had received them. 'If a lady,' he said, 'asked him any questions upon the subject, he would neither answer her nor speak to her again while he lived; if a gentleman, he would consider it as a mortal affront, and demand satisfaction as having received such.' He did not very long survive the dreadful catastrophe, having met with a fatal injury by a fall from his horse, as he rode between Leith and Holyrood House, of which he died the next day, 28th March 1682. Thus a few years removed all the principal actors in this frightful tragedy.

Various reports went abroad on this mysterious affair, many of them very inaccurate, though they could hardly be said to be exaggerated. It was difficult at that time to become acquainted with the history of a Scottish family above the lower rank; and strange things sometimes took place there, into which even the law did not scrupulously inquire.

The credulous Mr. Law says, generally, that the Lord President Stair had a daughter, who, 'being married, the night she was bride in [that is, bedded bride] was taken from her bridegroom and harled [dragged] through the house (by spirits, we are given to understand), and soon afterwards died. Another daughter,' he says, 'was possessed by an evil spirit.'

My friend, Mr. Sharpe, gives another edition of the tale. According to his information, it was the bridegroom who wounded the bride. The marriage, according to this account, had been against her mother's inclination, who had given her consent in these ominous words: 'You may marry him, but soon shall you repent it.'

I find still another account darkly insinuated in some highly scurrilous and abusive verses, of which I have an original copy. They are docketed as being written 'Upon the late Viscount Stair and his family, by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw. The marginals by William Dunlop, writer in Edinburgh, a son of the Laird of Househill, and nephew to the said Sir William Hamilton.' There was a bitter and personal quarrel and rivalry betwixt the author of this libel, a name which it richly deserves, and Lord President Stair: and the lampoon, which is written with much more malice than art, bears the following motto:—

> Stair's neck, mind, wife, sons, grandson, and the rest,
> Are wry, false, witch, pests, parricide, possessed.

This malignant satirist, who calls up all the misfortunes of the family, does not forget the fatal bridal of Baldoon. He seems, though his verses are as obscure as unpoetical, to intimate that the violence done to the bridegroom was by the intervention of the foul fiend, to whom the young lady had resigned herself, in case she should break her contract with her first lover. His hypothesis is inconsistent with the account given in the note upon Law's *Memorials*, but easily reconcilable to the family tradition.

In al Stair's off-spring we no difference know,
They doe the females as the males bestow;
So he of 's daughter's marriage gave the ward,
Like a true vassal, to Glenluce's Laird;
He knew what she did to her suitor plight,
If she her faith to Rutherfurd should slight,
Which, like his own, for greed he broke outright.
Nick did Baldoon's posterior right deride,
And, as first substitute, did seize the bride;
Whate'er he to his mistress did or said,
He threw the bridegroom from the nuptial bed,
Into the chimney did so his rival maul,
His bruised bones ne'er were cured but by the fall.[1]

One of the marginal notes ascribed to William Dunlop applies to the above lines. 'She had betrothed herself to Lord Rutherfoord under horrid imprecations, and afterwards married Baldoon, his nevoy, and her mother was the cause of her breach of faith.' The same tragedy is alluded to in the following couplet and note:—

What train of curses that base brood pursues,
When the young nephew weds old uncle's spouse.

The note on the word 'uncle' explains it as meaning 'Rutherfoord, who should have married the Lady Baldoon, was Baldoon's uncle.' The poetry of this satire on Lord Stair and his family was, as already noticed, written by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw, a rival of Lord Stair for the situation of President of the Court of Session; a person much inferior to that great lawyer in talents, and equally ill-treated by the calumny of just satire of his contemporaries as an unjust and partial judge. Some of the notes are by that curious and laborious antiquary, Robert Milne, who, as a virulent Jacobite, willingly lent a hand to blacken the family of Stair.[2]

Another poet of the period, with a very different purpose, has left an elegy, in which he darkly hints at and bemoans the fate of the ill-starred young person, whose very uncommon calamity Whitelaw, Dunlop, and Milne thought a fitting subject for buffoonery and ribaldry. This bard of milder mood was Andrew Symson, before the Revolution minister of Kirkinner, in Galloway, and after his expulsion as an Episcopalian

[1] The fall from his horse, by which he was killed.
[2] I have compared the satire, which occurs in the first volume of the curious little collection called a *Book of Scottish Pasquils*, 1827, with that which has a more full text and more extended notes, and which is in my own possession, by gift of Thomas Thomson, Esq., Register-Depute. In the second *Book of Pasquils*, p. 72, is a most abusive epitaph on Sir James Hamilton of Whitelaw.

following the humble occupation of a printer in Edinburgh. He furnished the family of Baldoon, with which he appears to have been intimate, with an elegy on the tragic event in their family. In this piece he treats the mournful occasion of the bride's death with mysterious solemnity.

The verses bear this title, 'On the unexpected death of the virtuous Lady Mrs. Janet Dalrymple, Lady Baldoon, younger,' and afford us the precise dates of the catastrophe, which could not otherwise have been easily ascertained. 'Nupta August 12. Domum Ducta August 24. Obiit September 12. Sepult. September 30, 1669.' The form of the elegy is a dialogue betwixt a passenger and a domestic servant. The first, recollecting that he had passed that way lately, and seen all around enlivened by the appearances of mirth and festivity, is desirous to know what had changed so gay a scene into mourning. We preserve the reply of the servant as a specimen of Mr. Symson's verses, which are not of the first quality:—

> Sir, 't is truth you 've told.
> We did enjoy great mirth; but now, ah me!
> Our joyful song 's turn'd to an elegie.
> A virtuous lady, not long since a bride,
> Was to a hopeful plant by marriage tied,
> And brought home hither. We did all rejoice,
> Even for her sake. But presently our voice
> Was turn'd to mourning, for that little time
> That she 'd enjoy: she waned in her prime,
> For Atropos, with her impartial knife,
> Soon cut her thread, and therewithal her life;
> And for the time we may it well remember,
> It being in unfortunate September;
> Where we must leave her till the resurrection,
> 'T is then the Saints enjoy their full perfection.[1]

Mr. Symson also poured forth his elegiac strains upon the fate of the widowed bridegroom, on which subject, after a long and querulous effusion, the poet arrives at the sound conclusion, that if Baldoon had walked on foot, which it seems was his general custom, he would have escaped perishing by a fall from horseback. As the work in which it occurs is so scarce as almost to be unique, and as it gives us the most full account of one of the actors in this tragic tale which we have rehearsed,

[1] This elegy is reprinted in the appendix to a topographical work by the same author, entitled *A Large Description of Galloway*, by Andrew Symson, Minister of Kirkinner, 8vo, Taits, Edinburgh, 1823. The reverend gentleman's elegies are extremely rare, nor did the Author ever see a copy but his own, which is bound up with the *Tripotriarchicon*, a religious poem from the Biblical History, by the same author.

we will, at the risk of being tedious, insert some short specimens of Mr. Symson's composition. It is entitled —

'A Funeral Elegie, occasioned by the sad and much lamented death of that worthily respected, and very much accomplished gentleman, David Dunbar, younger, of Baldoon, only son and apparent heir to the right worshipful Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon, Knight Baronet. He departed this life on March 28, 1682, having received a bruise by a fall, as he was riding the day preceding betwixt Leith and Holyrood House; and was honourably interred in the Abbey Church of Holyrood House, on April 4, 1682.'

Men might, and very justly too, conclude
Me guilty of the worst ingratitude,
Should I be silent, or should I forbear
At this sad accident to shed a tear;
A tear! said I? ah! that 's a petit thing,
A very lean, slight, slender offering,
Too mean, I 'm sure, for me, wherewith t' attend
The unexpected funeral of my friend:
A glass of briny tears charged up to th' brim,
Would be too few for me to shed for him.

The poet proceeds to state his intimacy with the deceased, and the constancy of the young man's attendance on public worship, which was regular, and had such effect upon two or three others that were influenced by his example,

So that my Muse 'gainst Priscian avers,
He, only he, *were* my parishioners;
Yea, and my only hearers.

He then describes the deceased in person and manners, from which it appears that more accomplishments were expected in the composition of a fine gentleman in ancient than modern times:

His body, though not very large or tall,
Was sprightly, active, yea and strong withal.
His constitution was, if right I 've guess'd,
Blood mixt with choler, said to be the best.
In 's gesture, converse, speech, discourse, attire,
He practis'd that which wise men still admire,
Commend, and recommend. What 's that? you'll say,
'T is this: he ever choos'd the middle way
'Twixt both th' extremes. Almost in ev'ry thing
He did the like, 't is worth our noticing:
Sparing, yet not a niggard; liberal,
And yet not lavish or a prodigal,
As knowing when to spend and when to spare;
And that 's a lesson which not many are

Acquainted with. He bashful was, yet daring
When he saw cause, and yet therein but sparing;
Familiar, yet not common, for he knew
To condescend, and keep his distance too.
He us'd, and that most commonly, to go
On foot; I wish that he had still done so.
Th' affairs of court were unto him well known;
And yet meanwhile he slighted not his own.
He knew full well how to behave at court,
And yet but seldom did thereto resort;
But lov'd the country life, choos'd to inure
Himself to past'rage and agriculture;
Proving, improving, ditching, trenching, draining,
Viewing, reviewing, and by those means gaining;
Planting, transplanting, levelling, erecting
Walls, chambers, houses, terraces; projecting
Now this, now that device, this draught, that measure,
That might advance his profit with his pleasure.
Quick in his bargains, honest in commerce,
Just in his dealings, being much averse
From quirks of law, still ready to refer
His cause t' an honest country arbiter.
He was acquainted with cosmography,
Arithmetic, and modern history;
With architecture and such arts as these,
Which I may call specifick sciences
Fit for a gentleman; and surely he
That knows them not, at least in some degree,
May brook the title, but he wants the thing,
Is but a shadow scarce worth noticing.
He learned the French, be 't spoken to his praise,
In very little more than fourty days.'

Then comes the full burst of woe, in which, instead of saying much himself, the poet informs us what the ancients would have said on such an occasion:

A heathen poet, at the news, no doubt,
Would have exclaimed, and furiously cry'd out
Against the fates, the destinies and starrs,
What! this the effect of planetarie warrs!
We might have seen him rage and rave, yea worse,
'T is very like we might have heard him curse
The year, the month, the day, the hour, the place,
The company, the wager, and the race;
Decry all recreations, with the names
Of Isthmian, Pythian, and Olympick games;
Exclaim against them all both old and new,
Both the Nemæan and the Lethæan too:
Adjudge all persons, under highest pain,
Always to walk on foot, and then again
Order all horses to be hough'd, that we
Might never more the like adventure see.

Supposing our readers have had enough of Mr. Symson's verses, and finding nothing more in his poem worthy of transcription, we turn to the tragic story.

It is needless to point out to the intelligent reader that the witchcraft of the mother consisted only in the ascendency of a powerful mind over a weak and melancholy one, and that the harshness with which she exercised her superiority in a case of delicacy had driven her daughter first to despair, then to frenzy. Accordingly, the Author has endeavoured to explain the tragic tale on this principle. Whatever resemblance Lady Ashton may be supposed to possess to the celebrated Dame Margaret Ross, the reader must not suppose that there was any idea of tracing the portrait of the first Lord Viscount Stair in the tricky and mean-spirited Sir William Ashton. Lord Stair, whatever might be his moral qualities, was certainly one of the first statesmen and lawyers of his age.

The imaginary castle of Wolf's Crag has been identified by some lover of locality with that of Fast Castle. The Author is not competent to judge of the resemblance betwixt the real and imaginary scene, having never seen Fast Castle except from the sea. But fortalices of this description are found occupying, like ospreys' nests, projecting rocks, or promontories, in many parts of the eastern coast of Scotland, and the position of Fast Castle seems certainly to resemble that of Wolf's Crag as much as any other, while its vicinity to the mountain ridge of Lammermoor renders the assimilation a probable one.

We have only to add, that the death of the unfortunate bridegroom by a fall from horseback has been in the novel transferred to the no less unfortunate lover.[1]

[*** It seems proper to append to the Author's Introduction a letter concerning the Bride of Lammermoor, addressed, in 1823, to the late Sir James Stewart Denham, of Coltness, by his relation, Sir Robert Dalrymple Horne Elphinstone, of Logie Elphinstone. These baronets were both connected in blood with the unfortunate heroine of the romance. The letter was first published in the *Edinburgh Evening Post* for October 10, 1840.

[1] See the account of how this novel was composed in Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. vi. p. 66 *et seq.*, ed. 1862 (*Laing*).

To General Sir James Stewart Denham, Bart.

September 5, 1823.

My Dear Sir James, — Various circumstances have occurred which have unavoidably prevented my returning an earlier answer to your queries regarding our unfortunate relative — 'The Bride of Lammermoor.' I shall now have much pleasure in complying with your wishes, in as far as an indifferent memory will enable me to do so.

'The Bride of Baldoon' (for such has always been her designation in our family) was the Honourable Janet Dalrymple, eldest daughter of our great-great-grandfather, James Viscount of Stair, Lord President of the Court of Session in the reign of William and Mary; sister to the first Earl of that name, and to our great-grandfather the Lord President Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick; and consequently our great-grand aunt.

She was secretly attached, and had plighted her faith, to the Lord Rutherford, when, under the auspices of her mother, a less amiable, but much more opulent suitor appeared, in the person of David Dunbar, eldest son of Sir David Dunbar of Baldoon (an ancestor of the Selkirk family), whose addresses were, as may be supposed, submitted to with the greatest aversion, from their being ungenerously persisted in after his being informed of her early attachment and solemn engagement. To this man, however, she was ultimately *forced* to give her hand.

The result of this cruel and unnatural sacrifice was nearly, if not exactly, as related by Sir Walter Scott. On the marriage night, soon after the young couple were left alone, violent and continued screams were heard to proceed from the bridal-chamber, and on the door (which was found locked) being forced open, the bridegroom was found extended on the floor, stabbed and weltering in his blood, while the bride sat in the corner of the large fire-place, in a state of the most deplorable frenzy, which continued without any lucid interval until the period of her death. She survived but a short time, during which (with the exception of the few words mentioned by Sir Walter Scott — 'Ye hae taen up your bonny bridegroom') she never spoke, and refused all sustenance.

The conclusion drawn from these extraordinary circumstances, and which seems to have been assumed by Sir Walter

as a fact, was, that the forlorn and distracted victim, seeing no other means of escaping from a fate which she beheld with disgust and abhorrence, had in a fit of desperation inflicted the fatal wound upon her selfish and unfeeling husband. But, in justice to the memory of our unhappy relative, we may be permitted to regret Sir Walter's not having been made acquainted with a tradition long current in the part of the country where the tragical event took place, — namely, that from the window having been found open, it was conjectured that the lover had, during the bustle and confusion occasioned by the preparations for the marriage feast, and perhaps by the connivance of some servant of the family, contrived to gain admission and to secrete himself in the bridal chamber, from whence he had made his escape into the garden, after having fought with and severely wounded his successful rival — a conclusion strengthened by other concurring circumstances, and rendered more probable by the fact of young Baldoon having, to his latest breath, obstinately refused to give any explanation on the subject, and which might well justify a belief that he was actuated by a desire of concealing the particulars of a rencontre, the causes and consequences of which he might justly consider as equally discreditable to himself. The unfortunate lover was said to have disappeared immediately after the catastrophe in a manner somewhat mysterious; but this part of the story has escaped my recollection.

While on the subject of this calamitous event, I cannot help offering some observations on the principal personages introduced in Sir Walter Scott's narrative, all of whom are more or less interesting both to you and me.

The character of Sir William Ashton certainly cannot be considered as a fair representation of our eminent and respectable ancestor Lord Stair, to whom he bears little resemblance, either as a politician or a gentleman; and Sir Walter would seem wishful to avoid the application, when he says that, on acquiring the ancient seat of the Lords of Ravenswood, Sir William had removed certain old family portraits and replaced them by 'those of King William and Queen Mary, and of Sir Thomas Hope and Lord Stair, two distinguished Scots lawyers': but on this point some less ambiguous intimation would have been very desirable, and having in the character of Lucy Ashton stuck so closely to the character of the daughter, the Author should, in fairness, have been at more pains to prevent that of the Lord Keeper from being considered as an equally fair repre-

sentation of the father; an omission of which the descendants of Lord Stair have, I think, some reason to complain.

In Lady Ashton, the character of our great-great-grandmother seems in many respects more faithfully delineated, or at least less misrepresented. She was an ambitious and interested woman, of a masculine character and understanding, and the transaction regarding her daughter's marriage was believed to have been hers, and not her husband's, who, from his numerous important avocations as Lord President, Privy Councillor, and active assistant in the management of Scottish affairs, had probably neither time nor inclination to take much personal concern in family arrangements.

The situation of young Ravenswood bears a sufficiently strong resemblance to that of the Lord Rutherford, who was an amiable and high-spirited young man, nobly born and destitute of fortune, and who, if the above account is to be credited, as to the manner and *place* in which he thought proper to chastise his successful rival, seems to have been not ill cut out for a hero of romance. And as to young Baldoon, of whom little is known beyond what has been related above, he seems to have a more respectable representation than deserved in the person of Bucklaw.

The story was, I have understood, communicated to Sir Walter Scott by our worthy friend, the late Mrs. Murray Keith, who seems to have been well acquainted with all the particulars, excepting those to which I have more especially alluded; which, as a friend and connexion of the family, had she known, she would not have failed to mention; and in as far as his information went (with the exception of his having changed the scene of action from the *west coast to the east*), Sir Walter seems to have adhered to facts as closely as could well be expected in a work bearing the general stamp of fiction. But, if the memory of so disastrous and distressing a family anecdote was to be preserved and handed down to posterity in a story so singularly affecting, and by an author the most popular of our own or any other age, while it was surely of importance to avoid any such offensive misrepresentation of character as that to which I have alluded, it was at the same time much to be lamented that the Author of the *Bride of Lammermoor* should have been ignorant of a tradition so truly worthy of credit; throwing so much satisfactory light on an event equally tragical and mysterious, and which, while a judicious management of the circumstances might have increased rather than diminished the interest of

the narrative, would have left a less painful impression regarding our unhappy and unfortunate relative, 'The Bride of Baldoon.'

With best regards from all here, to you and Lady Stewart,

I remain, my dear Sir James,

Ever most truly yours,

ROBERT DALRYMPLE HORNE ELPHINSTONE.]

THE
BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR

CHAPTER I

By cauk and keel to win your bread,
Wi' whigmaleeries for them wha need,
Whilk is a gentle trade indeed
To carry the gaberlunzie on.

Old Song.

FEW have been in my secret while I was compiling these narratives, nor is it probable that they will ever become public during the life of their author. Even were that event to happen, I am not ambitious of the honoured distinction, *digito monstrari*. I confess that, were it safe to cherish such dreams at all, I should more enjoy the thought of remaining behind the curtain unseen, like the ingenious manager of Punch and his wife Joan, and enjoying the astonishment and conjectures of my audience. Then might I, perchance, hear the productions of the obscure Peter Pattieson praised by the judicious and admired by the feeling, engrossing the young and attracting even the old; while the critic traced their fame up to some name of literary celebrity, and the question when, and by whom, these tales were written filled up the pause of conversation in a hundred circles and coteries. This I may never enjoy during my lifetime; but farther than this, I am certain, my vanity should never induce me to aspire.

I am too stubborn in habits, and too little polished in manners, to envy or aspire to the honours assigned to my literary contemporaries. I could not think a whit more highly of myself were I even found worthy to 'come in place as a lion' for a winter in the great metropolis. I could not rise, turn round, and show all my honours, from the shaggy mane to the tufted tail, 'roar you an 't were any nightingale,' and so lie down

again like a well-behaved beast of show, and all at the cheap and easy rate of a cup of coffee and a slice of bread and butter as thin as a wafer. And I could ill stomach the fulsome flattery with which the lady of the evening indulges her show-monsters on such occasions, as she crams her parrots with sugar-plums, in order to make them talk before company. I cannot be tempted to 'come aloft' for these marks of distinction, and, like imprisoned Samson, I would rather remain — if such must be the alternative — all my life in the mill-house, grinding for my very bread, than be brought forth to make sport for the Philistine lords and ladies. This proceeds from no dislike, real or affected, to the aristocracy of these realms. But they have their place, and I have mine; and, like the iron and earthen vessels in the old fable, we can scarce come into collision without my being the sufferer in every sense. It may be otherwise with the sheets which I am now writing. These may be opened and laid aside at pleasure; by amusing themselves with the perusal, the great will excite no false hopes; by neglecting or condemning them, they will inflict no pain; and how seldom can they converse with those whose minds have toiled for their delight without doing either the one or the other.

In the better and wiser tone of feeling which Ovid only expresses in one line to retract in that which follows, I can address these quires —

Parve, nec invideo, sine me, liber, ibis in urbem.

Nor do I join the regret of the illustrious exile, that he himself could not in person accompany the volume, which he sent forth to the mart of literature, pleasure, and luxury. Were there not a hundred similar instances on record, the fate of my poor friend and school-fellow, Dick Tinto, would be sufficient to warn me against seeking happiness in the celebrity which attaches itself to a successful cultivator of the fine arts.

Dick Tinto, when he wrote himself artist, was wont to derive his origin from the ancient family of Tinto, of that ilk, in Lanarkshire, and occasionally hinted that he had somewhat derogated from his gentle blood in using the pencil for his principal means of support. But if Dick's pedigree was correct, some of his ancestors must have suffered a more heavy declension, since the good man his father executed the necessary, and, I trust, the honest, but certainly not very distinguished, employment of tailor in ordinary to the village of Langdirdum in the west. Under his humble roof was Richard born, and to his father's

humble trade was Richard, greatly contrary to his inclination, early indentured. Old Mr. Tinto had, however, no reason to congratulate himself upon having compelled the youthful genius of his son to forsake its natural bent. He fared like the school-boy who attempts to stop with his finger the spout of a water cistern, while the stream, exasperated at this compression, escapes by a thousand uncalculated spirts, and wets him all over for his pains. Even so fared the senior Tinto, when his hopeful apprentice not only exhausted all the chalk in making sketches upon the shopboard, but even executed several caricatures of his father's best customers, who began loudly to murmur, that it was too hard to have their persons deformed by the vestments of the father, and to be at the same time turned into ridicule by the pencil of the son. This led to discredit and loss of practice, until the old tailor, yielding to destiny and to the entreaties of his son, permitted him to attempt his fortune in a line for which he was better qualified.

There was about this time, in the village of Langdirdum, a peripatetic brother of the brush, who exercised his vocation *sub Jove frigido*, the object of admiration to all the boys of the village, but especially to Dick Tinto. The age had not yet adopted, amongst other unworthy retrenchments, that illiberal measure of economy which, supplying by written characters the lack of symbolical representation, closes one open and easily accessible avenue of instruction and emolument against the students of the fine arts. It was not yet permitted to write upon the plastered doorway of an alehouse, or the suspended sign of an inn, 'The Old Magpie,' or 'The Saracen's Head,' substituting that cold description for the lively effigies of the plumed chatterer, or the turban'd frown of the terrific soldan. That early and more simple age considered alike the necessities of all ranks, and depicted the symbols of good cheer so as to be obvious to all capacities; well judging that a man who could not read a syllable might nevertheless love a pot of good ale as well as his better-educated neighbours, or even as the parson himself. Acting upon this liberal principle, publicans as yet hung forth the painted emblems of their calling, and sign-painters, if they seldom feasted, did not at least absolutely starve.

To a worthy of this decayed profession, as we have already intimated, Dick Tinto became an assistant; and thus, as is not unusual among heaven-born geniuses in this department of the fine arts, began to paint before he had any notion of drawing.

His talent for observing nature soon induced him to rectify the errors, and soar above the instructions, of his teacher. He particularly shone in painting horses, that being a favourite sign in the Scottish villages; and, in tracing his progress, it is beautiful to observe how by degrees he learned to shorten the backs and prolong the legs of these noble animals, until they came to look less like crocodiles, and more like nags. Detraction, which always pursues merit with strides proportioned to its advancement, has indeed alleged that Dick once upon a time painted a horse with five legs, instead of four. I might have rested his defence upon the license allowed to that branch of his profession, which, as it permits all sorts of singular and irregular combinations, may be allowed to extend itself so far as to bestow a limb supernumerary on a favourite subject. But the cause of a deceased friend is sacred; and I disdain to bottom it so superficially. I have visited the sign in question, which yet swings exalted in the village of Langdirdum; and I am ready to depone upon oath that what has been idly mistaken or misrepresented as being the fifth leg of the horse, is, in fact, the tail of that quadruped, and, considered with reference to the posture in which he is delineated, forms a circumstance introduced and managed with great and successful, though daring, art. The nag being represented in a rampant or rearing posture, the tail, which is prolonged till it touches the ground, appears to form a *point d'appui*, and gives the firmness of a tripod to the figure, without which it would be difficult to conceive, placed as the feet are, how the courser could maintain his ground without tumbling backwards. This bold conception has fortunately fallen into the custody of one by whom it is duly valued; for, when Dick, in his more advanced state of proficiency, became dubious of the propriety of so daring a deviation from the established rules of art, and was desirous to execute a picture of the publican himself in exchange for this juvenile production, the courteous offer was declined by his judicious employer, who had observed, it seems, that when his ale failed to do its duty in conciliating his guests, one glance at his sign was sure to put them in good humour.

It would be foreign to my present purpose to trace the steps by which Dick Tinto improved his touch, and corrected, by the rules of art, the luxuriance of a fervid imagination. The scales fell from his eyes on viewing the sketches of a contemporary, the Scottish Teniers, as Wilkie has been deservedly styled. He threw down the brush, took up the crayons, and, amid hunger

and toil, and suspense and uncertainty, pursued the path of his profession under better auspices than those of his original master. Still the first rude emanations of his genius, like the nursery rhymes of Pope, could these be recovered, will be dear to the companions of Dick Tinto's youth. There is a tankard and gridiron painted over the door of an obscure change-house in the Back Wynd of Gandercleugh —— But I feel I must tear myself from the subject, or dwell on it too long.

Amid his wants and struggles, Dick Tinto had recourse, like his brethren, to levying that tax upon the vanity of mankind which he could not extract from their taste and liberality — in a word, he painted portraits. It was in this more advanced state of proficiency, when Dick had soared above his original line of business, and highly disdained any allusion to it, that, after having been estranged for several years, we again met in the village of Gandercleugh, I holding my present situation, and Dick painting copies of the human face divine at a guinea per head. This was a small premium, yet, in the first burst of business, it more than sufficed for all Dick's moderate wants; so that he occupied an apartment at the Wallace Inn, cracked his jest with impunity even upon mine host himself, and lived in respect and observance with the chambermaid, hostler, and waiter.

Those halcyon days were too serene to last long. When his honour the Laird of Gandercleugh, with his wife and three daughters, the minister, the gauger, mine esteemed patron Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, and some round dozen of the feuars and farmers, had been consigned to immortality by Tinto's brush, custom began to slacken, and it was impossible to wring more than crowns and half-crowns from the hard hands of the peasants whose ambition led them to Dick's painting-room.

Still, though the horizon was overclouded, no storm for some time ensued. Mine host had Christian faith with a lodger who had been a good paymaster as long as he had the means. And from a portrait of our landlord himself, grouped with his wife and daughters, in the style of Rubens, which suddenly appeared in the best parlour, it was evident that Dick had found some mode of bartering art for the necessaries of life.

Nothing, however, is more precarious than resources of this nature. It was observed that Dick became in his turn the whetstone of mine host's wit, without venturing either at defence or retaliation; that his easel was transferred to a

garret-room, in which there was scarce space for it to stand upright; and that he no longer ventured to join the weekly club, of which he had been once the life and soul. In short, Dick Tinto's friends feared that he had acted like the animal called the sloth, which, having eaten up the last green leaf upon the tree where it has established itself, ends by tumbling down from the top, and dying of inanition. I ventured to hint this to Dick, recommended his transferring the exercise of his inestimable talent to some other sphere, and forsaking the common which he might be said to have eaten bare.

'There is an obstacle to my change of residence,' said my friend, grasping my hand with a look of solemnity.

'A bill due to my landlord, I am afraid?' replied I, with heartfelt sympathy; 'if any part of my slender means can assist in this emergence——'

'No, by the soul of Sir Joshua!' answered the generous youth, 'I will never involve a friend in the consequences of my own misfortune. There is a mode by which I can regain my liberty; and to creep even through a common sewer is better than to remain in prison.'

I did not perfectly understand what my friend meant. The muse of painting appeared to have failed him, and what other goddess he could invoke in his distress was a mystery to me. We parted, however, without further explanation, and I did not again see him until three days after, when he summoned me to partake of the 'foy' with which his landlord proposed to regale him ere his departure for Edinburgh.

I found Dick in high spirits, whistling while he buckled the small knapsack which contained his colours, brushes, pallets, and clean shirt. That he parted on the best terms with mine host was obvious from the cold beef set forth in the low parlour, flanked by two mugs of admirable brown stout; and I own my curiosity was excited concerning the means through which the face of my friend's affairs had been so suddenly improved. I did not suspect Dick of dealing with the devil, and by what earthly means he had extricated himself thus happily I was at a total loss to conjecture.

He perceived my curiosity, and took me by the hand. 'My friend,' he said, 'fain would I conceal, even from you, the degradation to which it has been necessary to submit, in order to accomplish an honourable retreat from Ganderclengh. But what avails attempting to conceal that which must needs betray itself even by its superior excellence? All the village—all the

parish — all the world — will soon discover to what poverty has reduced Richard Tinto.'

A sudden thought here struck me. I had observed that our landlord wore, on that memorable morning, a pair of bran new velveteens, instead of his ancient thicksets.

'What,' said I, drawing my right hand, with the forefinger and thumb pressed together, nimbly from my right haunch to my left shoulder, 'you have condescended to resume the paternal arts to which you were first bred — long stitches, ha, Dick?'

He repelled this unlucky conjecture with a frown and a pshaw, indicative of indignant contempt, and leading me into another room, showed me, resting against the wall, the majestic head of Sir William Wallace, grim as when severed from the trunk by the orders of the felon Edward.

The painting was executed on boards of a substantial thickness, and the top decorated with irons, for suspending the honoured effigy upon a signpost.

'There,' he said, 'my friend, stands the honour of Scotland, and my shame; yet not so — rather the shame of those who, instead of encouraging art in its proper sphere, reduce it to these unbecoming and unworthy extremities.'

I endeavoured to smooth the ruffled feelings of my misused and indignant friend. I reminded him that he ought not, like the stag in the fable, to despise the quality which had extricated him from difficulties, in which his talents, as a portrait or landscape painter, had been found unavailing. Above all, I praised the execution, as well as conception, of his painting, and reminded him that, far from feeling dishonoured by so superb a specimen of his talents being exposed to the general view of the public, he ought rather to congratulate himself upon the augmentation of his celebrity to which its public exhibition must necessarily give rise.

'You are right, my friend — you are right,' replied poor Dick, his eye kindling with enthusiasm; 'why should I shun the name of an — an — (he hesitated for a phrase) — an out-of-doors artist? Hogarth has introduced himself in that character in one of his best engravings; Domenichino, or somebody else, in ancient times, Morland in our own, have exercised their talents in this manner. And wherefore limit to the rich and higher classes alone the delight which the exhibition of works of art is calculated to inspire into all classes? Statues are placed in the open air, why should Painting be more niggardly in displaying her masterpieces than her sister Sculpture?

And yet, my friend, we must part suddenly: the carpenter is coming in an hour to put up the — the emblem; and truly, with all my philosophy, and your consolatory encouragement to boot, I would rather wish to leave Ganderclengh before that operation commences.'

We partook of our genial host's parting banquet, and I escorted Dick on his walk to Edinburgh. We parted about a mile from the village, just as we heard the distant cheer of the boys which accompanied the mounting of the new sy[illegible] of the Wallace Head. Dick Tinto mended his pace to get out of hearing, so little had either early practice or recent philosophy reconciled him to the character of a sign-painter.

In Edinburgh, Dick's talents were discovered and appreciated, and he received dinners and hints from several distinguished judges of the fine arts. But these gentlemen dispensed their criticisms more willingly than their cash, and Dick thought he wanted cash more than criticism. He therefore sought London, the universal mart of talent, and where, as is usual in general marts of most descriptions, much more of each commodity is exposed to sale than can ever find purchasers.

Dick, who, in serious earnest, was supposed to have considerable natural talents for his profession, and whose vain and sanguine disposition never permitted him to doubt for a moment of ultimate success, threw himself headlong into the crowd which jostled and struggled for notice and preferment. He elbowed others, and was elbowed himself; and finally, by dint of intrepidity, fought his way into some notice, painted for the print at the Institution, had pictures at the exhibition at Somerset House, and damned the hanging committee. But poor Dick was doomed to lose the field he fought so gallantly. In the fine arts, there is scarce an alternative betwixt distinguished success and absolute failure; and as Dick's zeal and industry were unable to ensure the first, he fell into the distresses which, in his condition, were the natural consequences of the latter alternative. He was for a time patronised by one or two of those judicious persons who make a virtue of being singular, and of pitching their own opinions against those of the world in matters of taste and criticism. But they soon tired of poor Tinto, and laid him down as a load, upon the principle on which a spoilt child throws away its plaything. Misery, I fear, took him up, and accompanied him to a premature grave, to which he was carried from an obscure lodging in Swallow Street, where he had been dunned by his landlady within doors and

watched by bailiffs without, until death came to his relief. A corner of the *Morning Post* noticed his death, generously adding, that his manner displayed considerable genius, though his style was rather sketchy; and referred to an advertisement, which announced that Mr. Varnish, a well-known printseller, had still on hand a very few drawings and paintings by Richard Tinto, Esquire, which those of the nobility and gentry who wish to complete their collections of modern art were invited to visit without delay. So ended Dick Tinto! a lamentable proof of the great truth, that in the fine arts mediocrity is not permitted, and that he who cannot ascend to the very top of the ladder will do well not to put his foot upon it at all.

The memory of Tinto is dear to me, from the recollection of the many conversations which we have had together, most of them turning upon my present task. He was delighted with my progress, and talked of an ornamented and illustrated edition, with heads, vignettes, and *culs de lampe*, all to be designed by his own patriotic and friendly pencil. He prevailed upon an old sergeant of invalids to sit to him in the character of Bothwell, the lifeguardsman of Charles the Second, and the jailman of Ganderclengh in that of David Deans. But while he thus proposed to unite his own powers with mine for the illustration of these narratives, he mixed many a dose of salutary criticism with the panegyrics which my composition was at times so fortunate as to call forth.

'Your characters,' he said, 'my dear Pattieson, make too much use of the *gib hur*; they *patter* too much (an elegant phraseology which Dick had learned while painting the scenes of an itinerant company of players); there is nothing in whole pages but mere chat and dialogue.'

'The ancient philosopher,' said I in reply, 'was wont to say, "Speak, that I may know thee"; and how is it possible for an author to introduce his *personæ dramatis* to his readers in a more interesting and effectual manner than by the dialogue in which each is represented as supporting his own appropriate character?'

'It is a false conclusion,' said Tinto: 'I hate it, Peter, as I hate an unfilled can. I will grant you, indeed, that speech is a faculty of some value in the intercourse of human affairs, and I will not even insist on the doctrine of that Pythagorean toper, who was of opinion that over a bottle speaking spoiled conversation. But I will not allow that a profession of the fine

arts has occasion to embody the idea of his scene in language, in order to impress upon the reader its reality and its effect. On the contrary, I will be judged by most of your readers, Peter, should these tales ever become public, whether you have not given us a page of talk for every single idea which two words might have communicated, while the posture, and manner, and incident, accurately drawn, and brought out by appropriate colouring, would have preserved all that was worthy of preservation, and saved these everlasting "said he's" and "said she's," with which it has been your pleasure to encumber your pages.'

I replied, 'That he confounded the operations of the pencil and the pen; that the serene and silent art, as painting has been called by one of our first living poets, necessarily appealed to the eye, because it had not the organs for addressing the ear; whereas poetry, or that species of composition which approached to it, lay under the necessity of doing absolutely the reverse, and addressed itself to the ear, for the purpose of exciting that interest which it could not attain through the medium of the eye.'

Dick was not a whit staggered by my argument, which he contended was founded on misrepresentation. 'Description,' he said, 'was to the author of a romance exactly what drawing and tinting were to a painter: words were his colours, and, if properly employed, they could not fail to place the scene which he wished to conjure up as effectually before the mind's eye as the tablet or canvas presents it to the bodily organ. The same rules,' he contended, 'applied to both, and an exuberance of dialogue, in the former case, was a verbose and laborious mode of composition which went to confound the proper art of fictitious narrative with that of the drama, a widely different species of composition, of which dialogue was the very essence, because all, excepting the language to be made use of, was presented to the eye by the dresses, and persons, and actions of the performers upon the stage. But as nothing,' said Dick, 'can be more dull than a long narrative written upon the plan of a drama, so where you have approached most near to that species of composition, by indulging in prolonged scenes of mere conversation, the course of your story has become chill and constrained, and you have lost the power of arresting the attention and exciting the imagination, in which upon other occasions you may be considered as having succeeded tolerably well.'

I made my bow in requital of the compliment, which was probably thrown in by way of *placebo*, and expressed myself willing at least to make one trial of a more straightforward style of composition, in which my actors should do more, and say less, than in my former attempts of this kind. Dick gave me a patronising and approving nod, and observed that, finding me so docile, he would communicate, for the benefit of my muse, a subject which he had studied with a view to his own art.

'The story,' he said, 'was, by tradition, affirmed to be truth, although, as upwards of a hundred years had passed away since the events took place, some doubt upon the accuracy of all the particulars might be reasonably entertained.'

When Dick Tinto had thus spoken, he rummaged his portfolio for the sketch from which he proposed one day to execute a picture of fourteen feet by eight. The sketch, which was cleverly executed, to use the appropriate phrase, represented an ancient hall, fitted up and furnished in what we now call the taste of Queen Elizabeth's age. The light, admitted from the upper part of a high casement, fell upon a female figure of exquisite beauty, who, in an attitude of speechless terror, appeared to watch the issue of a debate betwixt two other persons. The one was a young man, in the Vandyke dress common to the time of Charles I., who, with an air of indignant pride, testified by the manner in which he raised his head and extended his arm, seemed to be urging a claim of right, rather than of favour, to a lady whose age, and some resemblance in their features, pointed her out as the mother of the younger female, and who appeared to listen with a mixture of displeasure and impatience.

Tinto produced his sketch with an air of mysterious triumph, and gazed on it as a fond parent looks upon a hopeful child, while he anticipates the future figure he is to make in the world, and the height to which he will raise the honour of his family. He held it at arm's length from me — he held it closer he placed it upon the top of a chest of drawers — closed the lower shutters of the casement, to adjust a downward and favourable light — fell back to the due distance, dragging me after him — shaded his face with his hand, as if to exclude all but the favourite object — and ended by spoiling a child's copy-book, which he rolled up so as to serve for the darkened tube of an amateur. I fancy my expressions of enthusiasm had not been in proportion to his own, for he presently exclaimed with

vehemence, 'Mr. Pattieson, I used to think you had an eye in your head.'

I vindicated my claim to the usual allowance of visual organs.

'Yet, on my honour,' said Dick, 'I would swear you had been born blind, since you have failed at the first glance to discover the subject and meaning of that sketch. I do not mean to praise my own performance, I leave these arts to others; I am sensible of my deficiencies, conscious that my drawing and colouring may be improved by the time I intend to dedicate to the art. But the conception — the expression — the positions — these tell the story to every one who looks at the sketch; and if I can finish the picture without diminution of the original conception, the name of Tinto shall no more be smothered by the mists of envy and intrigue.'

I replied, 'That I admired the sketch exceedingly; but that to understand its full merit, I felt it absolutely necessary to be informed of the subject.'

'That is the very thing I complain of,' answered Tinto; 'you have accustomed yourself so much to these creeping twilight details of yours, that you are become incapable of receiving that instant and vivid flash of conviction which darts on the mind from seeing the happy and expressive combinations of a single scene, and which gathers from the position, attitude, and countenance of the moment, not only the history of the past lives of the personages represented, and the nature of the business on which they are immediately engaged, but lifts even the veil of futurity, and affords a shrewd guess at their future fortunes.'

'In that case,' replied I, 'Painting excels the ape of the renowned Gines de Passamonte, which only meddled with the past and the present; nay, she excels that very Nature who affords her subjects; for I protest to you, Dick, that were I permitted to peep into that Elizabeth-chamber, and see the persons you have sketched conversing in flesh and blood, I should not be a jot nearer guessing the nature of their business than I am at this moment while looking at your sketch. Only generally, from the languishing look of the young lady, and the care you have taken to present a very handsome leg on the part of the gentleman, I presume there is some reference to a love affair between them.'

'Do you really presume to form such a bold conjecture?' said Tinto. 'And the indignant earnestness with which you see the man urge his suit, the unresisting and passive despair

of the younger female, the stern air of inflexible determination in the elder woman, whose looks express at once consciousness that she is acting wrong and a firm determination to persist in the course she has adopted ——'

'If her looks express all this, my dear Tinto,' replied I, interrupting him, 'your pencil rivals the dramatic art of Mr. Puff in *The Critic*, who crammed a whole complicated sentence into the expressive shake of Lord Burleigh's head.'

'My good friend, Peter,' replied Tinto, 'I observe you are perfectly incorrigible; however, I have compassion on your dulness, and am unwilling you should be deprived of the pleasure of understanding my picture, and of gaining, at the same time, a subject for your own pen. You must know then, last summer, while I was taking sketches on the coast of East Lothian and Berwickshire, I was seduced into the mountains of Lammermoor by the account I received of some remains of antiquity in that district. Those with which I was most struck were the ruins of an ancient castle in which that Elizabeth-chamber, as you call it, once existed. I resided for two or three days at a farmhouse in the neighbourhood, where the aged goodwife was well acquainted with the history of the castle, and the events which had taken place in it. One of these was of a nature so interesting and singular, that my attention was divided between my wish to draw the old ruins in landscape, and to represent, in a history-piece, the singular events which have taken place in it. Here are my notes of the tale,' said poor Dick, handing a parcel of loose scraps, partly scratched over with his pencil, partly with his pen, where outlines of caricatures, sketches of turrets, mills, old gables, and dovecots, disputed the ground with his written memoranda.

I proceeded, however, to decipher the substance of the manuscript as well as I could, and wove it into the following Tale, in which, following in part, though not entirely, my friend Tinto's advice, I endeavoured to render my narrative rather descriptive than dramatic. My favourite propensity, however, has at times overcome me, and my persons, like many others in this talking world, speak now and then a great deal more than they act.[1]

[1] [See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. vi. pp. 66, etc.]

CHAPTER II

Well, lords, we have not got that which we have ;
'T is not enough our foes are this time fled,
Being opposites of such repairing nature.

Henry VI. Part II.

IN the gorge of a pass or mountain glen, ascending from the fertile plains of East Lothian, there stood in former times an extensive castle, of which only the ruins are now visible. Its ancient proprietors were a race of powerful and warlike barons, who bore the same name with the castle itself, which was Ravenswood. Their line extended to a remote period of antiquity, and they had intermarried with the Douglasses, Humes, Swintons, Hays, and other families of power and distinction in the same country. Their history was frequently involved in that of Scotland itself, in whose annals their feats are recorded. The Castle of Ravenswood, occupying, and in some measure commanding, a pass betwixt Berwickshire, or the Merse, as the southeastern province of Scotland is termed, and the Lothians, was of importance both in times of foreign war and domestic discord. It was frequently besieged with ardour, and defended with obstinacy, and, of course, its owners played a conspicuous part in story. But their house had its revolutions, like all sublunary things : it became greatly declined from its splendour about the middle of the 17th century ; and towards the period of the Revolution, the last proprietor of Ravenswood Castle saw himself compelled to part with the ancient family seat, and to remove himself to a lonely and sea-beaten tower, which, situated on the bleak shores between St. Abb's Head and the village of Eyemouth, looked out on the lonely and boisterous German Ocean. A black domain of wild pastureland surrounded their new residence, and formed the remains of their property.

Lord Ravenswood, the heir of this ruined family, was far from bending his mind to his new condition of life. In the

RAVENSWOOD CASTLE.

From a painting by John Smart, A.R.S.A.

civil war of 1689 he had espoused the sinking side, and although he had escaped without the forfeiture of life or land, his blood had been attainted, and his title abolished. He was now called Lord Ravenswood only in courtesy.

This forfeited nobleman inherited the pride and turbulence, though not the fortune, of his house, and, as he imputed the final declension of his family to a particular individual, he honoured that person with his full portion of hatred. This was the very man who had now become, by purchase, proprietor of Ravenswood, and the domains of which the heir of the house now stood dispossessed. He was descended of a family much less ancient than that of Lord Ravenswood, and which had only risen to wealth and political importance during the great civil wars. He himself had been bred to the bar, and had held high offices in the state, maintaining through life the character of a skilful fisher in the troubled waters of a state divided by factions, and governed by delegated authority; and of one who contrived to amass considerable sums of money in a country where there was but little to be gathered, and who equally knew the value of wealth and the various means of augmenting it and using it as an engine of increasing his power and influence.

Thus qualified and gifted, he was a dangerous antagonist to the fierce and imprudent Ravenswood. Whether he had given him good cause for the enmity with which the Baron regarded him, was a point on which men spoke differently. Some said the quarrel arose merely from the vindictive spirit and envy of Lord Ravenswood, who could not patiently behold another, though by just and fair purchase, become the proprietor of the estate and castle of his forefathers. But the greater part of the public, prone to slander the wealthy in their absence as to flatter them in their presence, held a less charitable opinion. They said that the Lord Keeper (for to this height Sir William Ashton had ascended) had, previous to the final purchase of the estate of Ravenswood, been concerned in extensive pecuniary transactions with the former proprietor; and, rather intimating what was probable than affirming anything positively, they asked which party was likely to have the advantage in stating and enforcing the claims arising out of these complicated affairs, and more than hinted the advantages which the cool lawyer and able politician must necessarily possess over the hot, fiery, and imprudent character whom he had involved in legal toils and pecuniary snares.

The character of the times aggravated these suspicions. 'In those days there was no king in Israel.' Since the departure of James VI. to assume the richer and more powerful crown of England, there had existed in Scotland contending parties, formed among the aristocracy, by whom, as their intrigues at the court of St. James's chanced to prevail, the delegated powers of sovereignty were alternately swayed. The evils attending upon this system of government resemble those which afflict the tenants of an Irish estate, the property of an absentee. There was no supreme power, claiming and possessing a general interest with the community at large, to whom the oppressed might appeal from subordinate tyranny, either for justice or for mercy. Let a monarch be as indolent, as selfish, as much disposed to arbitrary power as he will, still, in a free country, his own interests are so clearly connected with those of the public at large, and the evil consequences to his own authority are so obvious and imminent when a different course is pursued, that common policy, as well as common feeling, point to the equal distribution of justice, and to the establishment of the throne in righteousness. Thus, even sovereigns remarkable for usurpation and tyranny have been found rigorous in the administration of justice among their subjects, in cases where their own power and passions were not compromised.

It is very different when the powers of sovereignty are delegated to the head of an aristocratic faction, rivalled and pressed closely in the race of ambition by an adverse leader. His brief and precarious enjoyment of power must be employed in rewarding his partizans, in extending his influence, in oppressing and crushing his adversaries. Even Abou Hassan, the most disinterested of all viceroys, forgot not, during his caliphate of one day, to send a *douceur* of one thousand pieces of gold to his own household; and the Scottish vicegerents, raised to power by the strength of their faction, failed not to embrace the same means of rewarding them.

The administration of justice, in particular, was infected by the most gross partiality. A case of importance scarcely occurred in which there was not some ground for bias or partiality on the part of the judges, who were so little able to withstand the temptation that the adage, 'Show me the man, and I will show you the law,' became as prevalent as it was scandalous. One corruption led the way to others still more gross and profligate. The judge who lent his sacred authority

in one case to support a friend, and in another to crush an enemy, and whose decisions were founded on family connexions or political relations, could not be supposed inaccessible to direct personal motives; and the purse of the wealthy was too often believed to be thrown into the scale to weigh down the cause of the poor litigant. The subordinate officers of the law affected little scruple concerning bribery. Pieces of plate and bags of money were sent in presents to the king's counsel, to influence their conduct, and poured forth, says a contemporary writer, like billets of wood upon their floors, without even the decency of concealment.

In such times, it was not over uncharitable to suppose that the statesman, practised in courts of law, and a powerful member of a triumphant cabal, might find and use means of advantage over his less skilful and less favoured adversary; and if it had been supposed that Sir William Ashton's conscience had been too delicate to profit by these advantages, it was believed that his ambition and desire of extending his wealth and consequence found as strong a stimulus in the exhortations of his lady as the daring aim of Macbeth in the days of yore.

Lady Ashton was of a family more distinguished than that of her lord, an advantage which she did not fail to use to the uttermost, in maintaining and extending her husband's influence over others, and, unless she was greatly belied, her own over him. She had been beautiful, and was stately and majestic in her appearance. Endowed by nature with strong powers and violent passions, experience had taught her to employ the one, and to conceal, if not to moderate, the other. She was a severe and strict observer of the external forms, at least, of devotion; her hospitality was splendid, even to ostentation; her address and manners, agreeable to the pattern most valued in Scotland at the period, were grave, dignified, and severely regulated by the rules of etiquette. Her character had always been beyond the breath of slander. And yet, with all these qualities to excite respect, Lady Ashton was seldom mentioned in the terms of love or affection. Interest — the interest of her family, if not her own — seemed too obviously the motive of her actions; and where this is the case, the sharp-judging and malignant public are not easily imposed upon by outward show. It was seen and ascertained that, in her most graceful courtesies and compliments, Lady Ashton no more lost sight of her object than the falcon in his airy wheel turns his quick eyes from his destined quarry; and hence, something of doubt and suspicion

qualified the feelings with which her equals received her attentions. With her inferiors these feelings were mingled with fear; an impression useful to her purposes, so far as it enforced ready compliance with her requests and implicit obedience to her commands, but detrimental, because it cannot exist with affection or regard.

Even her husband, it is said, upon whose fortunes her talents and address had produced such emphatic influence, regarded her with respectful awe rather than confiding attachment; and report said, there were times when he considered his grandeur as dearly purchased at the expense of domestic thraldom. Of this, however, much might be suspected, but little could be accurately known: Lady Ashton regarded the honour of her husband as her own, and was well aware how much that would suffer in the public eye should he appear a vassal to his wife. In all her arguments his opinion was quoted as infallible; his taste was appealed to, and his sentiments received, with the air of deference which a dutiful wife might seem to owe to a husband of Sir William Ashton's rank and character. But there was something under all this which rung false and hollow; and to those who watched this couple with close, and perhaps malicious, scrutiny it seemed evident that, in the haughtiness of a firmer character, higher birth, and more decided views of aggrandisement, the lady looked with some contempt on her husband, and that he regarded her with jealous fear, rather than with love or admiration.

Still, however, the leading and favourite interests of Sir William Ashton and his lady were the same, and they failed not to work in concert, although without cordiality, and to testify, in all exterior circumstances, that respect for each other which they were aware was necessary to secure that of the public.

Their union was crowned with several children, of whom three survived. One, the eldest son, was absent on his travels; the second, a girl of seventeen, and the third, a boy about three years younger, resided with their parents in Edinburgh during the sessions of the Scottish Parliament and Privy Council, at other times in the old Gothic castle of Ravenswood, to which the Lord Keeper had made large additions in the style of the 17th century.

Allan Lord Ravenswood, the late proprietor of that ancient mansion and the large estate annexed to it, continued for some time to wage ineffectual war with his successor concerning

various points to which their former transactions had given rise, and which were successively determined in favour of the wealthy and powerful competitor, until death closed the litigation, by summoning Ravenswood to a higher bar. The thread of life, which had been long wasting, gave way during a fit of violent and impotent fury with which he was assailed on receiving the news of the loss of a cause, founded, perhaps, rather in equity than in law, the last which he had maintained against his powerful antagonist. His son witnessed his dying agonies, and heard the curses which he breathed against his adversary, as if they had conveyed to him a legacy of vengeance. Other circumstances happened to exasperate a passion which was, and had long been, a prevalent vice in the Scottish disposition.

It was a November morning, and the cliffs which overlooked the ocean were hung with thick and heavy mist, when the portals of the ancient and half-ruinous tower, in which Lord Ravenswood had spent the last and troubled years of his life, opened, that his mortal remains might pass forward to an abode yet more dreary and lonely. The pomp of attendance, to which the deceased had, in his latter years, been a stranger, was revived as he was about to be consigned to the realms of forgetfulness.

Banner after banner, with the various devices and coats of this ancient family and its connexions, followed each other in mournful procession from under the low-browed archway of the courtyard. The principal gentry of the country attended in the deepest mourning, and tempered the pace of their long train of horses to the solemn march befitting the occasion. Trumpets, with banners of crape attached to them, sent forth their long and melancholy notes to regulate the movements of the procession. An immense train of inferior mourners and menials closed the rear, which had not yet issued from the castle gate when the van had reached the chapel where the body was to be deposited.

Contrary to the custom, and even to the law, of the time, the body was met by a priest of the Scottish Episcopal communion, arrayed in his surplice, and prepared to read over the coffin of the deceased the funeral service of the church. Such had been the desire of Lord Ravenswood in his last illness, and it was readily complied with by the Tory gentlemen, or Cavaliers, as they affected to style themselves, in which faction most of his kinsmen were enrolled. The Presbyterian Church judicatory of the bounds, considering the ceremony as a bravading insult

upon their authority, had applied to the Lord Keeper, as the nearest privy councillor, for a warrant to prevent its being carried into effect; so that, when the clergyman had opened his prayer-book, an officer of the law, supported by some armed men, commanded him to be silent. An insult which fired the whole assembly with indignation was particularly and instantly resented by the only son of the deceased, Edgar, popularly called the Master of Ravenswood, a youth of about twenty years of age. He clapped his hand on his sword, and, bidding the official person to desist at his peril from farther interruption, commanded the clergyman to proceed. The man attempted to enforce his commission; but as an hundred swords at once glittered in the air, he contented himself with protesting against the violence which had been offered to him in the execution of his duty, and stood aloof, a sullen and moody spectator of the ceremonial, muttering as one who should say, 'You 'll rue the day that clogs me with this answer.'

The scene was worthy of an artist's pencil. Under the very arch of the house of death, the clergyman, affrighted at the scene, and trembling for his own safety, hastily and unwillingly rehearsed the solemn service of the church, and spoke 'dust to dust and ashes to ashes,' over ruined pride and decayed prosperity. Around stood the relations of the deceased, their countenances more in anger than in sorrow, and the drawn swords which they brandished forming a violent contrast with their deep mourning habits. In the countenance of the young man alone, resentment seemed for the moment overpowered by the deep agony with which he beheld his nearest, and almost his only, friend consigned to the tomb of his ancestry. A relative observed him turn deadly pale, when, all rites being now duly observed, it became the duty of the chief mourner to lower down into the charnel vault, where mouldering coffins showed their tattered velvet and decayed plating, the head of the corpse which was to be their partner in corruption. He stept to the youth and offered his assistance, which, by a mute motion, Edgar Ravenswood rejected. Firmly, and without a tear, he performed that last duty. The stone was laid on the sepulchre, the door of the aisle was locked, and the youth took possession of its massive key.

As the crowd left the chapel, he paused on the steps which led to its Gothic chancel. 'Gentlemen and friends,' he said, 'you have this day done no common duty to the body of your deceased kinsman. The rites of due observance, which, in other

countries, are allowed as the due of the meanest Christian, would this day have been denied to the body of your relative — not certainly sprung of the meanest house in Scotland — had it not been assured to him by your courage. Others bury their dead in sorrow and tears, in silence and in reverence; our funeral rites are marred by the intrusion of bailiffs and ruffians, and our grief — the grief due to our departed friend — is chased from our cheeks by the glow of just indignation. But it is well that I know from what quiver this arrow has come forth. It was only he that dug the grave who could have the mean cruelty to disturb the obsequies; and Heaven do as much to me and more, if I requite not to this man and his house the ruin and disgrace he has brought on me and mine!'

A numerous part of the assembly applauded this speech, as the spirited expression of just resentment; but the more cool and judicious regretted that it had been uttered. The fortunes of the heir of Ravenswood were too low to brave the farther hostility which they imagined these open expressions of resentment must necessarily provoke. Their apprehensions, however, proved groundless, at least in the immediate consequences of this affair.

The mourners returned to the tower, there, according to a custom but recently abolished in Scotland, to carouse deep healths to the memory of the deceased, to make the house of sorrow ring with sounds of joviality and debauch, and to diminish, by the expense of a large and profuse entertainment, the limited revenues of the heir of him whose funeral they thus strangely honoured. It was the custom, however, and on the present occasion it was fully observed. The tables swam in wine, the populace feasted in the courtyard, the yeomen in the kitchen and buttery; and two years' rent of Ravenswood's remaining property hardly defrayed the charge of the funeral revel. The wine did its office on all but the Master of Ravenswood, — title which he still retained, though forfeiture had attached — that of his father. He, while passing around the cup which to himself did not taste, soon listened to a thousand exclamations against the Lord Keeper, and passionate protestations of attachment to himself, and to the honour of his house. He listened with dark and sullen brow to ebullitions which he considered justly as equally evanescent with the crimson bubbles on the brink of the goblet, or at least with the vapours which its contents excited in the brains of the revellers around him.

When the last flask was emptied, they took their leave with

deep protestations — to be forgotten on the morrow, if, indeed, those who made them should not think it necessary for their safety to make a more solemn retractation.

Accepting their adieus with an air of contempt which he could scarce conceal, Ravenswood at length beheld his ruinous habitation cleared of this confluence of riotous guests, and returned to the deserted hall, which now appeared doubly lonely from the cessation of that clamour to which it had so lately echoed. But its space was peopled by phantoms which the imagination of the young heir conjured up before him — the tarnished honour and degraded fortunes of his house, the destruction of his own hopes, and the triumph of that family by whom they had been ruined. To a mind naturally of a gloomy cast here was ample room for meditation, and the musings of young Ravenswood were deep and unwitnessed.

The peasant who shows the ruins of the tower, which still crown the beetling cliff and behold the war of the waves, though no more tenanted save by the sea-mew and cormorant, even yet affirms that on this fatal night the Master of Ravenswood, by the bitter exclamations of his despair, evoked some evil fiend, under whose malignant influence the future tissue of incidents was woven. Alas! what fiend can suggest more desperate counsels than those adopted under the guidance of our own violent and unresisted passions?

CHAPTER III

Over Gods forebode, then said the King,
That thou shouldst shoot at me.

William Bell, Clim o' the Clough, etc.

ON the morning after the funeral, the legal officer whose authority had been found insufficient to effect an interruption of the funeral solemnities of the late Lord Ravenswood, hastened to state before the Keeper the resistance which he had met with in the execution of his office.

The statesman was seated in a spacious library, once a banqueting-room in the old Castle of Ravenswood, as was evident from the armorial insignia still displayed on the carved roof, which was vaulted with Spanish chestnut, and on the stained glass of the casement, through which gleamed a dim yet rich light o.. the long rows of shelves, bending under the weight of legal commentators and monkish historians, whose ponderous volumes formed the chief and most valued contents of a Scottish historian of the period. On the massive oaken table and reading-desk lay a confused mass of letters, petitions, and parchments; to toil amongst which was the pleasure at once and the plague of Sir William Ashton's life. His appearance was grave and even noble, well becoming one who held a high office in the state; and it was not save after long and intimate conversation with him upon topics of pressing and personal interest, that a stranger could have discovered something vacillating and uncertain in his resolutions; an infirmity of purpose, arising from a cautious and timid disposition, which, as he was conscious of its internal influence on his mind, he was, from pride as well as policy, most anxious to conceal from others.

He listened with great apparent composure to an exaggerated account of the tumult which had taken place at the funeral, of the contempt thrown on his own authority and

that of the church and state; nor did he seem moved even by the faithful report of the insulting and threatening language which had been uttered by young Ravenswood and others, and obviously directed against himself. He heard, also, what the man had been able to collect, in a very distorted and aggravated shape, of the toasts which had been drunk, and the menaces uttered, at the subsequent entertainment. In fine, he made careful notes of all these particulars, and of the names of the persons by whom, in case of need, an accusation, founded upon these violent proceedings, could be witnessed and made good, and dismissed his informer, secure that he was now master of the remaining fortune, and even of the personal liberty, of young Ravenswood.

When the door had closed upon the officer of the law, the Lord Keeper remained for a moment in deep meditation; then, starting from his seat, paced the apartment as one about to take a sudden and energetic resolution. 'Young Ravenswood, he muttered, 'is now mine — he is my own: he has placed himself in my hand, and he shall bend or break. I have not forgot the determined and dogged obstinacy with which his father fought every point to the last, resisted every effort at compromise, embroiled me in lawsuits, and attempted to assail my character when he could not otherwise impugn my rights. This boy he has left behind him — this Edgar — this hot-headed, hare-brained fool, has wrecked his vessel before she has cleared the harbour. I must see that he gains no advantage of some turning tide which may again float him off. These memoranda, properly stated to the privy council, cannot but be construed into an aggravated riot, in which the dignity both of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities stands committed. A heavy fine might be imposed; an order for committing him to Edinburgh or Blackness Castle seems not improper; even a charge of treason might be laid on many of these words and expressions, though God forbid I should prosecute the matter to that extent. No, I will not; I will not touch his life, even if it should be in my power; and yet, if he lives till a change of times, what follows? Restitution — perhaps revenge. I know Athole promised his interest to old Ravenswood, and here is his son already bandying and making a faction by his own contemptible influence. What a ready tool he would be for the use of those who are watching the downfall of our administration!'

While these thoughts were agitating the mind of the wily statesman, and while he was persuading himself that his own

interest and safety, as well as those of his friends and party, depended on using the present advantage to the uttermost against young Ravenswood, the Lord Keeper sat down to his desk, and proceeded to draw up, for the information of the privy council, an account of the disorderly proceedings which, in contempt of his warrant, had taken place at the funeral of Lord Ravenswood. The names of most of the parties concerned, as well as the fact itself, would, he was well aware, sound odiously in the ears of his colleagues in administration, and most likely instigate them to make an example of young Ravenswood, at least, *in terrorem*.

It was a point of delicacy, however, to select such expressions as might infer the young man's culpability, without seeming directly to urge it, which, on the part of Sir William Ashton, his father's ancient antagonist, could not but appear odious and invidious. While he was in the act of composition, labouring to find words which might indicate Edgar Ravenswood to be the cause of the uproar, without specifically making such a charge, Sir William, in a pause of his task, chanced, in looking upward, to see the crest of the family for whose heir he was whetting the arrows and disposing the toils of the law carved upon one of the corbeilles from which the vaulted roof of the apartment sprung. It was a black bull's head, with the legend, 'I bide my time'; and the occasion upon which it was adopted mingled itself singularly and impressively with the subject of his present reflections.

It was said by a constant tradition that a Malisius de Ravenswood had, in the 13th century, been deprived of his castles and lands by a powerful usurper, who had for a while enjoyed his spoils in quiet. At length, on the eve of a costly banquet, Ravenswood, who had watched his opportunity, introduced himself into the castle with a small band of faithful retainers. The serving of the expected feast was impatiently looked for by the guests, and clamorously demanded by the temporary master of the castle. Ravenswood, who had assumed the disguise of a sewer upon the occasion, answered, in a stern voice, 'I bide my time': and at the same moment a bull's head, the ancient symbol of death, was placed upon the table. The explosion of the conspiracy took place upon the signal, and the usurper and his followers were put to death. Perhaps there was something in this still known and often repeated story which came immediately home to the breast and conscience of the Lord Keeper; for, putting from him the paper on which he had begun his report,

and carefully locking the memoranda which he had prepared into a cabinet which stood beside him, he proceeded to walk abroad, as if for the purpose of collecting his ideas, and reflecting farther on the consequences of the step which he was about to take, ere yet they became inevitable.

In passing through a large Gothic ante-room, Sir William Ashton heard the sound of his daughter's lute. Music, when the performers are concealed, affects us with a pleasure mingled with surprise, and reminds us of the natural concert of birds among the leafy bowers. The statesman, though little accustomed to give way to emotions of this natural and simple class, was still a man and a father. He stopped, therefore, and listened, while the silver tones of Lucy Ashton's voice mingled with the accompaniment in an ancient air, to which some one had adapted the following words:—

'Look not thou on beauty's charming,
Sit thou still when kings are arming,
Taste not when the wine-cup glistens,
Speak not when the people listens,
Stop thine ear against the singer,
From the red gold keep thy finger,
Vacant heart, and hand, and eye,
Easy live and quiet die.'

The sounds ceased, and the Keeper entered his daughter's apartment.

The words she had chosen seemed particularly adapted to her character; for Lucy Ashton's exquisitely beautiful, yet somewhat girlish features were formed to express peace of mind, serenity, and indifference to the tinsel of worldly pleasure. Her locks, which were of shadowy gold, divided on a brow of exquisite whiteness, like a gleam of broken and pallid sunshine upon a hill of snow. The expression of the countenance was in the last degree gentle, soft, timid, and feminine, and seemed rather to shrink from the most casual look of a stranger than to court his admiration. Something there was of a Madonna cast, perhaps the result of delicate health, and of residence in a family where the dispositions of the inmates were fiercer, more active, and energetic than her own.

Yet her passiveness of disposition was by no means owing to an indifferent or unfeeling mind. Left to the impulse of her own taste and feelings, Lucy Ashton was peculiarly accessible to those of a romantic cast. Her secret delight was in the old legendary tales of ardent devotion and unalterable affection,

chequered as they so often are with strange adventures and supernatural horrors. This was her favoured fairy realm, and here she erected her aerial palaces. But it was only in secret that she laboured at this delusive though delightful architecture. In her retired chamber, or in the woodland bower which she had chosen for her own, and called after her name, she was in fancy distributing the prizes at the tournament, or raining down influence from her eyes on the valiant combatants; or she was wandering in the wilderness with Una, under escort of the generous lion; or she was identifying herself with the simple yet noble-minded Miranda in the isle of wonder and enchantment.

But in her exterior relations to things of this world, Lucy willingly received the ruling impulse from those around her. The alternative was, in general, too indifferent to her to render resistance desirable, and she willingly found a motive for decision in the opinion of her friends which perhaps she might have sought for in vain in her own choice. Every reader must have observed in some family of his acquaintance some individual of a temper soft and yielding, who, mixed with stronger and more ardent minds, is borne along by the will of others, with as little power of opposition as the flower which is flung into a running stream. It usually happens that such a compliant and easy disposition, which resigns itself without murmur to the guidance of others, becomes the darling of those to whose inclinations its own seem to be offered, in ungrudging and ready sacrifice.

This was eminently the case with Lucy Ashton. Her politic, wary, and worldly father felt for her an affection the strength of which sometimes surprised him into an unusual emotion. Her elder brother, who trode the path of ambition with a haughtier step than his father, had also more of human affection. A soldier, and in a dissolute age, he preferred his sister Lucy even to pleasure and to military preferment and distinction. Her younger brother, at an age when trifles chiefly occupied his mind, made her the confidante of all his pleasures and anxieties, his success in field-sports, and his quarrels with his tutor and instructors. To these details, however trivial, Lucy lent patient and not indifferent attention. They moved and interested Henry, and that was enough to secure her ear.

Her mother alone did not feel that distinguished and predominating affection with which the rest of the family cherished

Lucy. She regarded what she termed her daughter's want of spirit as a decided mark that the more plebeian blood of her father predominated in Lucy's veins, and used to call her in derision her Lammermoor Shepherdess. To dislike so gentle and inoffensive a being was impossible; but Lady Ashton preferred her eldest son, on whom had descended a large portion of her own ambitious and undaunted disposition, to a daughter whose softness of temper seemed allied to feebleness of mind. Her eldest son was the more partially beloved by his mother because, contrary to the usual custom of Scottish families of distinction, he had been named after the head of the house.

'My Sholto,' she said, 'will support the untarnished honour of his maternal house, and elevate and support that of his father. Poor Lucy is unfit for courts or crowded halls. Some country laird must be her husband, rich enough to supply her with every comfort, without an effort on her own part, so that she may have nothing to shed a tear for but the tender apprehension lest he may break his neck in a fox-chase. It was not so, however, that our house was raised, nor is it so that it can be fortified and augmented. The Lord Keeper's dignity is yet new; it must be borne as if we were used to its weight, worthy of it, and prompt to assert and maintain it. Before ancient authorities men bend from customary and hereditary deference; in our presence they will stand erect, unless they are compelled to prostrate themselves. A daughter fit for the sheepfold or the cloister is ill qualified to exact respect where it is yielded with reluctance; and since Heaven refused us a third boy, Lucy should have held a character fit to supply his place. The hour will be a happy one which disposes her hand in marriage to some one whose energy is greater than her own, or whose ambition is of as low an order.'

So meditated a mother to whom the qualities of her children's hearts, as well as the prospect of their domestic happiness, seemed light in comparison to their rank and temporal greatness. But, like many a parent of hot and impatient character, she was mistaken in estimating the feelings of her daughter, who, under a semblance of extreme indifference, nourished the germ of those passions which sometimes spring up in one night, like the gourd of the prophet, and astonish the observer by their unexpected ardour and intensity. In fact, Lucy's sentiments seemed chill because nothing had occurred to interest or awaken them. Her life had hitherto flowed on in a uniform and gentle tenor, and happy

for her had not its present smoothness of current resembled that of the stream as it glides downwards to the waterfall!

'So, Lucy,' said her father, entering as her song was ended, 'does your musical philosopher teach you to contemn the world before you know it? That is surely something premature. Or did you but speak according to the fashion of fair maidens, who are always to hold the pleasures of life in contempt till they are pressed upon them by the address of some gentle knight?'

Lucy blushed, disclaimed any inference respecting her own choice being drawn from her selection of a song, and readily laid aside her instrument at her father's request that she would attend him in his walk.

A large and well-wooded park, or rather chase, stretched along the hill behind the castle, which, occupying, as we have noticed, a pass ascending from the plain, seemed built in its very gorge to defend the forest ground which arose behind it in shaggy majesty. Into this romantic region the father and daughter proceeded, arm in arm, by a noble avenue overarched by embowering elms, beneath which groups of the fallow deer were seen to stray in distant perspective. As they paced slowly on, admiring the different points of view, for which Sir William Ashton, notwithstanding the nature of his usual avocations, had considerable taste and feeling, they were overtaken by the forester, or park-keeper, who, intent on silvan sport, was proceeding with his cross-bow over his arm, and a hound led in leash by his boy, into the interior of the wood.

'Going to shoot us a piece of venison, Norman?' said his master, as he returned the woodman's salutation.

'Saul, your honour, and that I am. Will it please you to see the sport?'

'O no,' said his lordship, after looking at his daughter, whose colour fled at the idea of seeing the deer shot, although, had her father expressed his wish that they should accompany Norman, it was probable she would not even have hinted her reluctance.

The forester shrugged his shoulders. 'It was a disheartening thing,' he said, 'when none of the gentles came down to see the sport. He hoped Captain Sholto would be soon hame, or he might shut up his shop entirely; for Mr. Harry was kept sae close wi' his Latin nonsense that, though his will was very gude to be in the wood from morning till night, there would be a hopeful lad lost, and no making a man of him. It was not so,

he had heard, in Lord Ravenswood's time: when a buck was to be killed, man and mother's son ran to see; and when the deer fell, the knife was always presented to the knight, and he never gave less than a dollar for the compliment. And there was Edgar Ravenswood — Master of Ravenswood that is now — when he goes up to the wood — there hasna been a better hunter since Tristrem's time — when Sir Edgar hauds out,[1] down goes the deer, faith. But we hae lost a' sense of wooderaft on this side of the hill.'

There was much in this harangue highly displeasing to the Lord Keeper's feelings; he could not help observing that his menial despised him almost avowedly for not possessing that taste for sport which in those times was deemed the natural and indispensable attribute of a real gentleman. But the master of the game is, in all country houses, a man of great importance, and entitled to use considerable freedom of speech. Sir William, therefore, only smiled and replied, 'He had something else to think upon to-day than killing deer'; meantime, taking out his purse, he gave the ranger a dollar for his encouragement. The fellow received it as the waiter of a fashionable hotel receives double his proper fee from the hand of a country gentleman — that is, with a smile, in which pleasure at the gift is mingled with contempt for the ignorance of the donor. 'Your honour is the bad paymaster,' he said, 'who pays before it is done. What would you do were I to miss the buck after you have paid me my wood-fee?'

'I suppose,' said the Keeper, smiling, 'you would hardly guess what I mean were I to tell you of a *condictio indebiti*.'

'Not I, on my saul. I guess it is some law phrase; but sue a beggar, and — your honour knows what follows. Well, but I will be just with you, and if bow and brach fail not, you shall have a piece of game two fingers fat on the brisket.'

As he was about to go off, his master again called him, and asked, as if by accident, whether the Master of Ravenswood was actually so brave a man and so good a shooter as the world spoke him.

'Brave! — brave enough, I warrant you,' answered Norman. 'I was in the wood at Tyninghame when there was a sort of gallants hunting with my lord; on my saul, there was a buck turned to bay made us all stand back — a stout old Trojan of the first head, ten-tyned branches, and a brow as broad as e'er a bullock's. Egad, he dashed at the old lord, and there would

[1] *Hauds out.* Holds out, *i. e.*, presents his piece.

have been inlake among the peerage, if the Master had not whipt roundly in, and hamstrung him with his cutlass. He was but sixteen then, bless his heart!'

'And is he as ready with the gun as with the couteau?' said Sir William.

'He 'll strike this silver dollar out from beneath my finger and thumb at fourscore yards, and I 'll hold it out for a gold merk; what more would ye have of eye, hand, lead, and gunpowder?'

'O, no more to be wished, certainly,' said the Lord Keeper; 'but we keep you from your sport, Norman. Good morrow, good Norman.'

And, humming his rustic roundelay, the yeoman went on his road, the sound of his rough voice gradually dying away as the distance betwixt them increased: —

'The monk must arise when the matins ring,
The abbot may sleep to their chime;
But the yeoman must start when the bugles sing,
'T is time, my hearts, 't is time.

'There 's bucks and raes on Bilhope braes,
There 's a herd on Shortwood Shaw;
But a lily-white doe in the garden goes,
She 's fairly worth them a'.'

'Has this fellow,' said the Lord Keeper, when the yeoman's song had died on the wind, 'ever served the Ravenswood people, that he seems so much interested in them? I suppose you know, Lucy, for you make it a point of conscience to record the special history of every boor about the castle.'

'I am not quite so faithful a chronicler, my dear father; but I believe that Norman once served here while a boy, and before he went to Ledington, whence you hired him. But if you want to know anything of the former family, Old Alice is the best authority.'

'And what should I have to do with them, pray, Lucy,' said her father, 'or with their history or accomplishments?'

'Nay, I do not know, sir; only that you were asking questions of Norman about young Ravenswood.'

'Pshaw, child!' replied her father, yet immediately added, 'And who is Old Alice? I think you know all the old women in the country.'

'To be sure I do, or how could I help the old creatures when they are in hard times? And as to Old Alice, she is the very empress of old women and queen of gossips, so far as

legendary lore is concerned. She is blind, poor old soul, but when she speaks to you, you would think she has some way of looking into your very heart. I am sure I often cover my face, or turn it away, for it seems as if she saw one change colour, though she has been blind these twenty years. She is worth visiting, were it but to say you have seen a blind and paralytic old woman have so much acuteness of perception and dignity of manners. I assure you, she might be a countess from her language and behaviour. Come, you must go to see Alice we are not a quarter of a mile from her cottage.'

'All this, my dear,' said the Lord Keeper, 'is no answer to my question, who this woman is, and what is her connexion with the former proprietor's family?'

'O, it was something of a nourriceship, I believe; and she remained here because her two grandsons were engaged in your service. But it was against her will, I fancy; for the poor old creature is always regretting the change of times and of property.'

'I am much obliged to her,' answered the Lord Keeper 'She and her folk eat my bread and drink my cup, and are lamenting all the while that they are not still under a family which never could do good, either to themselves or any one else!'

'Indeed,' replied Lucy, 'I am certain you do Old Alice injustice. She has nothing mercenary about her, and would not accept a penny in charity, if it were to save her from being starved. She is only talkative, like all old folk when you put them on stories of their youth; and she speaks about the Ravenswood people, because she lived under them so many years. But I am sure she is grateful to you, sir, for your protection, and that she would rather speak to you than to any other person in the whole world beside. Do, sir, come and see Old Alice.'

And with the freedom of an indulged daughter she dragged the Lord Keeper in the direction she desired.

CHAPTER IV

Through tops of the high trees she did descry
A little smoke, whose vapour, thin and light,
Reeking aloft, uprolled to the sky,
Which cheerful sign did send unto her sight,
That in the same did wonne some living wight.

SPENSER.

LUCY acted as her father's guide, for he was too much engrossed with his political labours, or with society, to be perfectly acquainted with his own extensive domains, and, moreover, was generally an inhabitant of the city of Edinburgh; and she, on the other hand, had, with her mother, resided the whole summer in Ravenswood, and, partly from taste, partly from want of any other amusement, had, by her frequent rambles, learned to know each lane, alley, dingle, or bushy dell,

And every bosky bourne from side to side.

We have said that the Lord Keeper was not indifferent to the beauties of nature; and we add, in justice to him, that he felt them doubly when pointed out by the beautiful, simple, and interesting girl who, hanging on his arm with filial kindness, now called him to admire the size of some ancient oak, and now the unexpected turn where the path, developing its maze from glen or dingle, suddenly reached an eminence commanding an extensive view of the plains beneath them, and then gradually glided away from the prospect to lose itself among rocks and thickets, and guide to scenes of deeper seclusion.

It was when pausing on one of those points of extensive and commanding view that Lucy told her father they were close by the cottage of her blind *protégée;* and on turning from the little hill, a path which led around it, worn by the daily steps of the infirm inmate, brought them in sight of the

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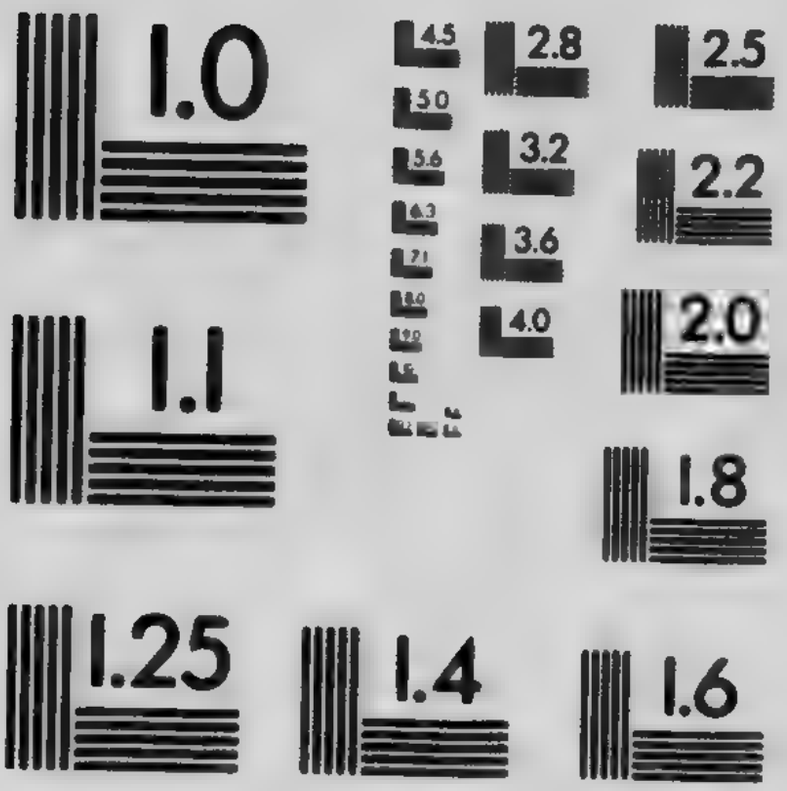

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hut, which, embosomed in a deep and obscure dell, seemed to have been so situated purposely to bear a correspondence with the darkened state of its inhabitant.

The cottage was situated immediately under a tall rock, which in some measure beetled over it, as if threatening to drop some detached fragment from its brow on the frail tenement beneath. The hut itself was constructed of turf and stones, and rudely roofed over with thatch, much of which was in a dilapidated condition. The thin blue smoke rose from it in a light column, and curled upward along the white face of the incumbent rock, giving the scene a tint of exquisite softness. In a small and rude garden, surrounded by straggling elder-bushes, which formed a sort of imperfect hedge, sat near to the bee-hives, by the produce of which she lived, that 'woman old' whom Lucy had brought her father hither to visit.

Whatever there had been which was disastrous in her fortune, whatever there was miserable in her dwelling, it was easy to judge by the first glance that neither years, poverty, misfortune, nor infirmity had broken the spirit of this remarkable woman.

She occupied a turf seat, placed under a weeping birch of unusual magnitude and age, as Judah is represented sitting under her palm-tree, with an air at once of majesty and of dejection. Her figure was tall, commanding, and but little bent by the infirmities of old age. Her dress, though that of a peasant, was uncommonly clean, forming in that particular a strong contrast to most of her rank, and was disposed with an attention to neatness, and even to taste, equally unusual. But it was her expression of countenance which chiefly struck the spectator, and induced most persons to address her with a degree of deference and civility very inconsistent with the miserable state of her dwelling; and which, nevertheless, she received with that easy composure which showed she felt it to be her due. She had once been beautiful, but her beauty had been of a bold and masculine cast, such as does not survive the bloom of youth; yet her features continued to express strong sense, deep reflection, and a character of sober pride, which, as we have already said of her dress, appeared to argue a conscious superiority to those of her own rank. It scarce seemed possible that a face, deprived of the advantage of sight, could have expressed character so strongly; but her eyes, which were almost totally closed, did not, by the display of their sightless

orbs, mar the countenance to which they could add nothing. She seemed in a ruminating posture, soothed, perhaps, by the murmurs of the busy tribe around her to abstraction, though not to slumber.

Lucy undid the latch of the little garden gate, and solicited the old woman's attention. 'My father, Alice, is come to see you.'

'He is welcome, Miss Ashton, and so are you,' said the old woman, turning and inclining her head towards her visitors.

'This is a fine morning for your bee-hives, mother,' said the Lord Keeper, who, struck with the outward appearance of Alice, was somewhat curious to know if her conversation would correspond with it.

'I believe so, my lord,' she replied; 'I feel the air breathe milder than of late.'

'You do not,' resumed the statesman, 'take charge of these bees yourself, mother? How do you manage them?'

'By delegates, as kings do their subjects,' resumed Alice; 'and I am fortunate in a prime minister. Here, Babie.'

She whistled on a small silver call which hung around her neck, and which at that time was sometimes used to summon domestics, and Babie, a girl of fifteen, made her appearance from the hut, not altogether so cleanly arrayed as she would probably have been had Alice had the use of her eyes, but with a greater air of neatness than was upon the whole to have been expected.

'Babie,' said her mistress, 'offer some bread and honey to the Lord Keeper and Miss Ashton; they will excuse your awkwardness if you use cleanliness and despatch.'

Babie performed her mistress's command with the grace which was naturally to have been expected, moving to and fro with a lobster-like gesture, her feet and legs tending one way, while her head, turned in a different direction, was fixed in wonder upon the laird, who was more frequently heard of than seen by his tenants and dependants. The bread and honey, however, deposited on a plantain leaf, was offered and accepted in all due courtesy. The Lord Keeper, still retaining the place which he had occupied on the decayed trunk of a fallen tree, looked as if he wished to prolong the interview, but was at a loss how to introduce a suitable subject.

'You have been long a resident on this property?' he said, after a pause.

'It is now nearly sixty years since I first knew Ravenswood,' answered the old dame, whose conversation, though perfectly

civil and respectful, seemed cautiously limited to the unavoidable and necessary task of replying to Sir William.

'You are not, I should judge by your accent, of this country originally?' said the Lord Keeper, in continuation.

'No; I am by birth an Englishwoman.'

'Yet you seem attached to this country as if it were your own.'

'It is here,' replied the blind woman, 'that I have drunk the cup of joy and of sorrow which Heaven destined for me. I was here the wife of an upright and affectionate husband for more than twenty years; I was here the mother of six promising children; it was here that God deprived me of all these blessings; it was here they died, and yonder, by yon ruined chapel, they lie all buried. I had no country but theirs while they lived; I have none but theirs now they are no more.'

'But your house,' said the Lord Keeper, looking at it, 'is miserably ruinous?'

'Do, my dear father,' said Lucy, eagerly, yet bashfully, catching at the hint, 'give orders to make it better; that is, if you think it proper.'

'It will last my time, my dear Miss Lucy,' said the blind woman; 'I would not have my lord give himself the least trouble about it.'

'But,' said Lucy, 'you once had a much better house, and were rich, and now in your old age to live in this hovel!'

'It is as good as I deserve, Miss Lucy; if my heart has not broke with what I have suffered, and seen others suffer, it must have been strong enough, and the rest of this old frame has no right to call itself weaker.'

'You have probably witnessed many changes,' said the Lord Keeper; 'but your experience must have taught you to expect them.'

'It has taught me to endure them, my lord,' was the reply.

'Yet you knew that they must needs arrive in the course of years?' said the statesman.

'Ay; as I know that the stump, on or beside which you sit, once a tall and lofty tree, must needs one day fall by decay, or by the axe; yet I hoped my eyes might not witness the downfall of the tree which overshadowed my dwelling.'

'Do not suppose,' said the Lord Keeper, 'that you will lose any interest with me for looking back with regret to the days when another family possessed my estates. You had reason,

doubtless, to love them, and I respect your gratitude. I will order some repairs in your cottage, and I hope we shall live to be friends when we know each other better.'

'Those of my age,' returned the dame, 'make no new friends. I thank you for your bounty, it is well intended undoubtedly; but I have all I want, and I cannot accept more at your lordship's hands.'

'Well, then,' continued the Lord Keeper, 'at least allow me to say, that I look upon you as a woman of sense and education beyond your appearance, and that I hope you will continue to reside on this property of mine rent-free for your life.'

'I hope I shall,' said the old dame, composedly; 'I believe that was made an article in the sale of Ravenswood to your lordship, though such a trifling circumstance may have escaped your recollection.'

'I remember — I recollect,' said his lordship, somewhat confused. 'I perceive you are too much attached to your old friends to accept any benefit from their successor.'

'Far from it, my lord; I am grateful for the benefits which I decline, and I wish I could pay you for offering them, better than what I am now about to say.' The Lord Keeper looked at her in some surprise, but said not a word. 'My lord,' she continued, in an impressive and solemn tone, 'take care what you do; you are on the brink of a precipice.'

'Indeed?' said the Lord Keeper, his mind reverting to the political circumstances of the country. 'Has anything come to your knowledge — any plot or conspiracy?'

No, my lord; those who traffic in such commodities do not call into their councils the old, blind, and infirm. My warning is of another kind. You have driven matters hard with the house of Ravenswood. Believe a true tale: they are a fierce house, and there is danger in dealing with men when they become desperate.'

'Tush,' answered the Keeper; 'what has been between us has been the work of the law, not my doing: and to the law they must look, if they would impugn my proceedings.'

'Ay, but they may think otherwise, and take the law into their own hand, when they fail of other means of redress.'

'What mean you?' said the Lord Keeper. 'Young Ravenswood would not have recourse to personal violence?'

'God forbid I should say so! I know nothing of the youth but what is honourable and open. Honourable and open, said I? I should have added, free, generous, noble. But he is still

a Ravenswood, and may bide his time. Remember the fate of Sir George Lockhart.'[1]

The Lord Keeper started as she called to his recollection a tragedy so deep and so recent. The old woman proceeded: 'Chiesley, who did the deed, was a relative of Lord Ravenswood. In the hall of Ravenswood, in my presence and in that of others, he avowed publicly his determination to do the cruelty which he afterwards committed. I could not keep silence, though to speak it ill became my station. "You are devising a dreadful crime," I said, "for which you must reckon before the judgment seat." Never shall I forget his look, as he replied, "I must reckon then for many things, and will reckon for this also." Therefore I may well say, beware of pressing a desperate man with the hand of authority. There is blood of Chiesley in the veins of Ravenswood, and one drop of it were enough to fire him in the circumstances in which he is placed. I say, beware of him.'

The old dame had, either intentionally or by accident, harped aright the fear of the Lord Keeper. The desperate and dark resource of private assassination, so familiar to a Scottish baron in former times, had even in the present age been too frequently resorted to under the pressure of unusual temptation, or where the mind of the actor was prepared for such a crime. Sir William Ashton was aware of this; as also that young Ravenswood had received injuries sufficient to prompt him to that sort of revenge, which becomes a frequent though fearful consequence of the partial administration of justice. He endeavoured to disguise from Alice the nature of the apprehensions which he entertained; but so ineffectually, that a person even of less penetration than nature had endowed her with must necessarily have been aware that the subject lay near his bosom. His voice was changed in its accent as he replied to her, 'That the Master of Ravenswood was a man of honour; and, were it otherwise, that the fate of Chiesley of Dalry was a sufficient warning to any one who should dare to assume the office of avenger of his own imaginary wrongs.' And having hastily uttered these expressions, he rose and left the place without waiting for a reply.

[1] See Note 2.

CHAPTER V

Is she a Capulet?
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt.
SHAKESPEARE.

THE Lord Keeper walked for nearly a quarter of a mile in profound silence. His daughter, naturally timid, and bred up in those ideas of filial awe and implicit obedience which were inculcated upon the youth of that period, did not venture to interrupt his meditations.

'Why do you look so pale, Lucy?' said her father, turning suddenly round and breaking silence.

According to the ideas of the time, which did not permit a young woman to offer her sentiments on any subject of importance unless especially required to do so, Lucy was bound to appear ignorant of the meaning of all that had passed betwixt Alice and her father, and imputed the emotion he had observed to the fear of the wild cattle which grazed in that part of the extensive chase through which they were now walking.

Of these animals, the descendants of the savage herds which anciently roamed free in the Caledonian forests, it was formerly a point of state to preserve a few in the parks of the Scottish nobility. Specimens continued within the memory of man to be kept at least at three houses of distinction — namely, Hamilton, Drumlanrick, and Cumbernauld. They had degenerated from the ancient race in size and strength, if we are to judge from the accounts of old chronicles, and from the formidable remains frequently discovered in bogs and morasses when drained and laid open. The bull had lost the shaggy honours of his mane, and the race was small and light made, in colour a dingy white, or rather a pale yellow, with black horns and hoofs. They retained, however, in some measure, the ferocity of their ancestry, could not be domesticated on account of their antipathy to the human race, and were often dangerous if approached un-

guardedly, or wantonly disturbed. It was this last reason which has occasioned their being extirpated at the places we have mentioned, where probably they would otherwise have been retained as appropriate inhabitants of a Scottish wood land, and fit tenants for a baronial forest. A few, if I mistake not, are still preserved at Chillingham Castle, in Northumberland, the seat of the Earl of Tankerville.[1]

It was to her finding herself in the vicinity of a group of three or four of these animals, that Lucy thought proper to impute those signs of fear which had arisen in her countenance for a different reason. For she had been familiarised with the appearance of the wild cattle during her walks in the chase; and it was not then, as it may be now, a necessary part of a young lady's demeanour, to indulge in causeless tremors of the nerves. On the present occasion, however, she speedily found cause for real terror.

Lucy had scarcely replied to her father in the words we have mentioned, and he was just about to rebuke her supposed timidity, when a bull, stimulated either by the scarlet colour of Miss Ashton's mantle, or by one of those fits of capricious ferocity to which their dispositions are liable, detached himself suddenly from the group which was feeding at the upper extremity of a grassy glade, that seemed to lose itself among the crossing and entangled boughs. The animal approached the intruders on his pasture ground, at first slowly, pawing the ground with his hoof, bellowing from time to time, and tearing up the sand with his horns, as if to lash himself up to rage and violence.

The Lord Keeper, who observed the animal's demeanour, was aware that he was about to become mischievous, and, drawing his daughter's arm under his own, began to walk fast along the avenue, in hopes to get out of his sight and his reach. This was the most injudicious course he could have adopted, for, encouraged by the appearance of flight, the bull began to pursue them at full speed. Assailed by a danger so imminent, firmer courage than that of the Lord Keeper might have given way. But paternal tenderness, 'love strong as death,' sustained him. He continued to support and drag onward his daughter, until her fears altogether depriving her of the power of flight, she sunk down by his side; and when he could no longer assist her to escape, he turned round and placed himself betwixt her and the raging animal, which, ad-

[1] [See a note to *Castle Dangerous*.]

vancing in full career, its brutal fury enhanced by the rapidity of the pursuit, was now within a few yards of them. The Lord Keeper had no weapons: his age and gravity dispensed even with the usual appendage of a walking sword — could such appendage have availed him anything.

It seemed inevitable that the father or daughter, or both, should have fallen victims to the impending danger, when a shot from the neighbouring thicket arrested the progress of the animal. He was so truly struck between the junction of the spine with the skull, that the wound, which in any other part of his body might scarce have impeded his career, proved instantly fatal. Stumbling forward with a hideous bellow, the progressive force of his previous motion, rather than any operation of his limbs, carried him up to within three yards of the astonished Lord Keeper, where he rolled on the ground, his limbs darkened with the black death-sweat, and quivering with the last convulsions of muscular motion.

Lucy lay senseless on the ground, insensible of the wonderful deliverance which she had experienced. Her father was almost equally stupified, so rapid and unexpected had been the transition from the horrid death which seemed inevitable to perfect security. He gazed on the animal, terrible even in death, with a species of mute and confused astonishment, which did not permit him distinctly to understand what had taken place; and so inaccurate was his consciousness of what had passed, that he might have supposed the bull had been arrested in its career by a thunderbolt, had he not observed among the branches of the thicket the figure of a man, with a short gun or musquetoon in his hand.

This instantly recalled him to a sense of their situation: a glance at his daughter reminded him of the necessity of procuring her assistance. He called to the man, whom he concluded be one of his foresters, to give immediate attention to Miss hton, while he himself hastened to call assistance. The untsman approached them accordingly, and the Lord Keeper aw he was a stranger, but was too much agitated to make any farther remarks. In a few hurried words he directed the shooter, as stronger and more active than himself, to carry the young lady to a neighbouring fountain, while he went back to Alice's hut to procure more aid.

The man to whose timely interference they had been so much indebted did not seem inclined to leave his good work half finished. He raised Lucy from the ground in his arms,

and conveying her through the glades of the forest by paths with which he seemed well acquainted, stopped not until he laid her in safety by the side of a plentiful and pellucid fountain, which had been once covered in, screened and decorated with architectural ornaments of a Gothic character. But now the vault which had covered it being broken down and riven, and the Gothic font ruined and demolished, the stream burst forth from the recess of the earth in open day, and winded its way among the broken sculpture and moss-grown stones which lay in confusion around its source.

Tradition, always busy, at least in Scotland, to grace with a legendary tale a spot in itself interesting, had ascribed a cause of peculiar veneration to this fountain. A beautiful young lady met one of the Lords of Ravenswood while hunting near this spot, and, like a second Egeria, had captivated the affections of the feudal Numa. They met frequently afterwards, and always at sunset, the charms of the nymph's mind completing the conquest which her beauty had begun, and the mystery of the intrigue adding zest to both. She always appeared and disappeared close by the fountain, with which, therefore, her lover judged she had some inexplicable connexion. She placed certain restrictions on their intercourse, which also savoured of mystery. They met only once a-week. Friday was the appointed day — and she explained to the Lord of Ravenswood that they were under the necessity of separating so soon as the bell of a chapel, belonging to a hermitage in the adjoining wood, now long ruinous, should toll the hour of vespers. In the course of his confession, the Baron of Ravenswood entrusted the hermit with the secret of this singular amour, and Father Zachary drew the necessary and obvious consequence that his patron was enveloped in the toils of Satan, and in danger of destruction, both to body and soul. He urged these perils to the Baron with all the force of monkish rhetoric, and described, in the most frightful colours, the real character and person of the apparently lovely Naiad, whom he hesitated not to denounce as a limb of the kingdom of darkness. The lover listened with obstinate incredulity; and it was not until worn out by the obstinacy of the anchoret that he consented to put the state and condition of his mistress to a certain trial, and for that purpose acquiesced in Zachary's proposal that on their next interview the vespers' bell should be rung half an hour later than usual. The hermit maintained and buckled his opinion, by quotations from *Malleus Maleficarum*, Spren-

gerus, Remigius, and other learned demonologists, that the Evil One, thus seduced to remain behind the appointed hour, would assume her true shape, and, having appeared to her terrified lover as a fiend of hell, would vanish from him in a flash of sulphurous lightning. Raymond of Ravenswood acquiesced in the experiment, not incurious concerning the issue, though confident it would disappoint the expectations of the hermit.

At the appointed hour the lovers met, and their interview was protracted beyond that at which they usually parted, by the delay of the priest to ring his usual curfew. No change took place upon the nymph's outward form; but as soon as the lengthening shadows made her aware that the usual hour of the vespers' chime was passed, she tore herself from her lover's arms with a shriek of despair, bid him adieu for ever, and, plunging into the fountain, disappeared from his eyes. The bubbles occasioned by her descent were crimsoned with blood as they arose, leading the distracted Baron to infer that his ill-judged curiosity had occasioned the death of this interesting and mysterious being. The remorse which he felt, as well as the recollection of her charms, proved the penance of his future life, which he lost in the battle of Flodden not many months after. But, in memory of his Naiad, he had previously ornamented the fountain in which she appeared to reside, and secured its waters from profanation or pollution by the small vaulted building of which the fragments still remained scattered around it. From this period the house of Ravenswood was supposed to have dated its decay.

Such was the generally-received legend, which some, who would seem wiser than the vulgar, explained as obscurely intimating the fate of a beautiful maid of plebeian rank, the mistress of this Raymond, whom he slew in a fit of jealousy, and whose blood was mingled with the waters of the locked fountain, as it was commonly called. Others imagined that the tale had a more remote origin in the ancient heathen mythology. All, however, agreed that the spot was fatal to the Ravenswood family; and that to drink of the waters of the well, or even approach its brink, was as ominous to a descendant of that house as for a Grahame to wear green, a Bruce to kill a spider, or a St. Clair to cross the Ord on a Monday.

It was on this ominous spot that Lucy Ashton first drew breath after her long and almost deadly swoon. Beautiful and pale as the fabulous Naiad in the last agony of separation from her lover, she was seated so as to rest with her back against a

part of the ruined wall, while her mantle, dripping with the water which her protector had used profusely to recall her senses, clung to her slender and beautifully proportioned form.

The first moment of recollection brought to her mind the danger which had overpowered her senses; the next called to remembrance that of her father. She looked around: he was nowhere to be seen. 'My father, my father!' was all that she could ejaculate.

'Sir William is safe,' answered the voice of a stranger 'perfectly safe, and will be with you instantly.'

'Are you sure of that?' exclaimed Lucy. 'The bull was close by us. Do not stop me: I must go to seek my father.'

And she arose with that purpose; but her strength was so much exhausted that, far from possessing the power to execute her purpose, she must have fallen against the stone on which she had leant, probably not without sustaining serious injury.

The stranger was so near to her that, without actually suffering her to fall, he could not avoid catching her in his arms, which, however, he did with a momentary reluctance, very unusual when youth interposes to prevent beauty from danger. It seemed as if her weight, slight as it was, proved too heavy for her young and athletic assistant, for, without feeling the temptation of detaining her in his arms even for a single instant, he again placed her on the stone from which she had risen, and retreating a few steps, repeated hastily, 'Sir William Ashton is perfectly safe, and will be here instantly. Do not make yourself anxious on his account: Fate has singularly preserved him. You, madam, are exhausted, and must not think of rising until you have some assistance more suitable than mine.'

Lucy, whose senses were by this time more effectually collected, was naturally led to look at the stranger with attention. There was nothing in his appearance which should have rendered him unwilling to offer his arm to a young lady who required support, or which could have induced her to refuse his assistance; and she could not help thinking, even in that moment, that he seemed cold and reluctant to offer it. A shooting dress of dark cloth intimated the rank of the wearer, though concealed in part by a large and loose cloak of a dark brown colour. A montero cap and a black feather drooped over the wearer's brow, and partly concealed his features, which, so far as seen, were dark, regular, and full of majestic, though somewhat sullen, expression. Some secret sorrow, or the brooding spirit of some moody passion, had quenched the light and ingenuous vivacity

of youth in a countenance singularly fitted to display both, and it was not easy to gaze on the stranger without a secret impression either of pity or awe, or at least of doubt and curiosity allied to both.

The impression which we have necessarily been long in describing, Lucy felt in the glance of a moment, and had no sooner encountered the keen black eyes of the stranger than her own were bent on the ground with a mixture of bashful embarrassment and fear. Yet there was a necessity to speak, or at least she thought so, and in a fluttered accent she began to mention her wonderful escape, in which she was sure that the stranger must, under Heaven, have been her father's protector and her own.

He seemed to shrink from her expressions of gratitude, while he replied abruptly, 'I leave you, madam,' the deep melody of his voice rendered powerful, but not harsh, by something like a severity of tone — 'I leave you to the protection of those to whom it is possible you may have this day been a guardian angel.'

Lucy was surprised at the ambiguity of his language, and, with a feeling of artless and unaffected gratitude, began to deprecate the idea of having intended to give her deliverer any offence, as if such a thing had been possible. 'I have been unfortunate,' she said, 'in endeavouring to express my thanks — I am sure it must be so, though I cannot recollect what I said; but would you but stay till my father — till the Lord Keeper comes; would you only permit him to pay you his thanks, and to inquire your name?'

'My name is unnecessary,' answered the stranger; 'your father — I would rather say Sir William Ashton — will learn it soon enough, for all the pleasure it is likely to afford him.'

'You mistake him,' said Lucy, earnestly; 'he will be grateful for my sake and for his own. You do not know my father, or you are deceiving me with a story of his safety, when he has already fallen a victim to the fury of that animal.'

When she had caught this idea, she started from the ground and endeavoured to press towards the avenue in which the accident had taken place, while the stranger, though he seemed to hesitate between the desire to assist and the wish to leave her, was obliged, in common humanity, to oppose her both by entreaty and action.

'On the word of a gentleman, madam, I tell you the truth; your father is in perfect safety; you will expose yourself to

injury if you venture back where the herd of wild cattle grazed. If you will go' — for, having once adopted the idea that her father was still in danger, she pressed forward in spite of him — 'if you *will* go, accept my arm, though I am not perhaps the person who can with most propriety offer you support.'

But, without heeding this intimation, Lucy took him at his word. 'O, if you be a man,' she said — 'if you be a gentleman, assist me to find my father! You shall not leave me — you must go with me; he is dying perhaps while we are talking here!'

Then, without listening to excuse or apology, and holding fast by the stranger's arm, though unconscious of anything save the support which it gave, and without which she could not have moved, mixed with a vague feeling of preventing his escape from her, she was urging, and almost dragging, him forward when Sir William Ashton came up, followed by the female attendant of blind Alice, and by two wood-cutters, whom he had summoned from their occupation to his assistance. His joy at seeing his daughter safe overcame the surprise with which he would at another time have beheld her hanging as familiarly on the arm of a stranger as she might have done upon his own.

'Lucy, my dear Lucy, are you safe? — are you well?' were the only words that broke from him as he embraced her in ecstasy.

'I am well, sir, thank God! and still more that I see you so; but this gentleman,' she said, quitting his arm and shrinking from him, 'what must he think of me?' and her eloquent blood, flushing over neck and brow, spoke how much she was ashamed of the freedom with which she had craved, and even compelled, his assistance.

'This gentleman,' said Sir William Ashton, 'will, I trust, not regret the trouble we have given him, when I assure him of the gratitude of the Lord Keeper for the greatest service which one man ever rendered to another — for the life of my child — for my own life, which he has saved by his bravery and presence of mind. He will, I am sure, permit us to request ——'

'Request nothing of ME, my lord,' said the stranger, in a stern and peremptory tone; 'I am the Master of Ravenswood.'

There was a dead pause of surprise, not unmixed with less pleasant feelings. The Master wrapt himself in his cloak, made a haughty inclination towards Lucy, muttering a few

words of courtesy, as indistinctly heard as they seemed to be reluctantly uttered, and, turning from them, was immediately lost in the thicket.

'The Master of Ravenswood!' said the Lord Keeper, when he had recovered his momentary astonishment. 'Hasten after him — stop him — beg him to speak to me for a single moment.'

The two foresters accordingly set off in pursuit of the stranger. They speedily reappeared, and, in an embarrassed and awkward manner, said the gentleman would not return.

The Lord Keeper took one of the fellows aside, and questioned him more closely what the Master of Ravenswood had said.

'He just said he wadna come back,' said the man, with the caution of a prudent Scotchman, who cared not to be the bearer of an unpleasant errand.

'He said something more, sir,' said the Lord Keeper, 'and I insist on knowing what it was.'

'Why, then, my lord,' said the man, looking down, 'he said —— But it wad be nae pleasure to your lordship to hear it, for I daresay the Master meant nae ill.'

'That 's none of your concern, sir; I desire to hear the very words.'

'Weel, then,' replied the man, 'he said, "Tell Sir William Ashton that the next time he and I forgather, he will not be half sae blithe of our meeting as of our parting."'

'Very well, sir,' said the Lord Keeper, 'I believe he alludes to a wager we have on our hawks; it is a matter of no consequence.'

He turned to his daughter, who was by this time so much recovered as to be able to walk home. But the effect, which the various recollections connected with a scene so terrific made upon a mind which was susceptible in an extreme degree, was more permanent than the injury which her nerves had sustained. Visions of terror, both in sleep and in waking reveries, recalled to her the form of the furious animal, and the dreadful bellow with which he accompanied his career; and it was always the image of the Master of Ravenswood, with his native nobleness of countenance and form, that seemed to interpose betwixt her and assured death. It is, perhaps, at all times dangerous for a young person to suffer recollection to dwell repeatedly, and with too much complacency, on the same individual; but in Lucy's situation it was almost unavoidable. She had never happened to see a young man of mien and features so romantic and so striking as young Ravenswood;

but had she seen an hundred his equals or his superiors in those particulars, no one else could have been linked to her heart by the strong associations of remembered danger and escape, of gratitude, wonder, and curiosity. I say curiosity, for it is likely that the singularly restrained and unaccommodating manners of the Master of Ravenswood, so much at variance with the natural expression of his features and grace of his deportment, as they excited wonder by the contrast, had their effect in riveting her attention to the recollection. She knew little of Ravenswood, or the disputes which had existed betwixt her father and his, and perhaps could in her gentleness of mind hardly have comprehended the angry and bitter passions which they had engendered. But she knew that he was come of noble stem; was poor, though descended from the noble and the wealthy; and she felt that she could sympathise with the feelings of a proud mind, which urged him to recoil from the proffered gratitude of the new proprietors of his father's house and domains. Would he have equally shunned their acknowledgments and avoided their intimacy, had her father's request been urged more mildly, less abruptly, and softened with the grace which women so well know how to throw into their manner, when they mean to mediate betwixt the headlong passions of the ruder sex? This was a perilous question to ask her own mind — perilous both in the idea and in its consequences.

Lucy Ashton, in short, was involved in those mazes of the imagination which are most dangerous to the young and the sensitive. Time, it is true, absence, change of scene and new faces, might probably have destroyed the illusion in her instance, as it has done in many others; but her residence remained solitary, and her mind without those means of dissipating her pleasing visions. This solitude was chiefly owing to the absence of Lady Ashton, who was at this time in Edinburgh, watching the progress of some state-intrigue; the Lord Keeper only received society out of policy or ostentation, and was by nature rather reserved and unsociable; and thus no cavalier appeared to rival or to obscure the ideal picture of chivalrous excellence which Lucy had pictured to herself in the Master of Ravenswood.

While Lucy indulged in these dreams, she made frequent visits to old blind Alice, hoping it would be easy to lead her to talk on the subject which at present she had so imprudently admitted to occupy so large a portion of her thoughts. But

Alice did not in this particular gratify her wishes and expectations. She spoke readily, and with pathetic feeling, concerning the family in general, but seemed to observe an especial and cautious silence on the subject of the present representative. The little she said of him was not altogether so favourable as Lucy had anticipated. She hinted that he was of a stern and unforgiving character, more ready to resent than to pardon injuries; and Lucy combined, with great alarm, the hints which she now dropped of these dangerous qualities with Alice's advice to her father, so emphatically given, 'to beware of Ravenswood.'

But that very Ravenswood, of whom such unjust suspicions had been entertained, had, almost immediately after they had been uttered, confuted them by saving at once her father's life and her own. Had he nourished such black revenge as Alice's dark hints seemed to indicate, no deed of active guilt was necessary to the full gratification of that evil passion. He needed but to have withheld for an instant his indispensable and effective assistance, and the object of his resentment must have perished, without any direct aggression on his part, by a death equally fearful and certain. She conceived, therefore, that some secret prejudice, or the suspicions incident to age and misfortune, had led Alice to form conclusions injurious to the character, and irreconcilable both with the generous conduct and noble features, of the Master of Ravenswood. And in this belief Lucy reposed her hope, and went on weaving her enchanted web of fairy tissue, as beautiful and transient as the film of the gossamer when it is pearled with the morning dew and glimmering to the sun.

Her father, in the meanwhile, as well as the Master of Ravenswood, were making reflections, as frequent though more solid than those of Lucy, upon the singular event which had taken place. The Lord Keeper's first task, when he returned home, was to ascertain by medical advice that his daughter had sustained no injury from the dangerous and alarming situation in which she had been placed. Satisfied on this topic, he proceeded to revise the memoranda which he had taken down from the mouth of the person employed to interrupt the funeral service of the late Lord Ravenswood. Bred to casuistry, and well accustomed to practise the ambidexter ingenuity of the bar, it cost him little trouble to soften the features of the tumult which he had been at first so anxious to exaggerate. He preached to his colleagues of the privy council the necessity of using

conciliatory measures with young men, whose blood and temper were hot, and their experience of life limited. He did not hesitate to attribute some censure to the conduct of the officer, as having been unnecessarily irritating.

These were the contents of his public despatches. The letters which he wrote to those private friends into whose management the matter was likely to fall were of a yet more favourable tenor. He represented that lenity in this case would be equally politic and popular, whereas, considering the high respect with which the rites of interment are regarded in Scotland, any severity exercised against the Master of Ravenswood for protecting those of his father from interruption, would be on all sides most unfavourably construed. And, finally, assuming the language of a generous and high-spirited man, he made it his particular request that this affair should be passed over without severe notice. He alluded with delicacy to the predicament in which he himself stood with young Ravenswood, as having succeeded in the long train of litigation by which the fortunes of that noble house had been so much reduced, and confessed it would be most peculiarly acceptable to his feelings, could he find means in some sort to counterbalance the disadvantages which he had occasioned the family, though only in the prosecution of his just and lawful rights. He therefore made it his particular and personal request that the matter should have no farther consequences, and insinuated a desire that he himself should have the merit of having put a stop to it by his favourable report and intercession. It was particularly remarkable that, contrary to his uniform practice, he made no special communication to Lady Ashton upon the subject of the tumult; and although he mentioned the alarm which Lucy had received from one of the wild cattle, yet he gave no detailed account of an incident so interesting and terrible

There was much surprise among Sir William Ashton's political friends and colleagues on receiving letters of a tenor so unexpected. On comparing notes together, one smiled, one put up his eyebrows, a third nodded acquiescence in the general wonder, and a fourth asked if they were sure these were *all* the letters the Lord Keeper had written on the subject. 'It runs strangely in my mind, my lords, that none of these advices contain the root of the matter.'

But no secret letters of a contrary nature had been received, although the question seemed to imply the possibility of their existence.

'Well,' said an old grey-headed statesman, who had contrived, by shifting and trimming, to maintain his post at the steerage through all the changes of course which the vessel had held for thirty years, 'I thought Sir William would hae verified the auld Scottish saying, "As soon comes the lamb's skin to market as the auld tup's."'

'We must please him after his own fashion,' said another, 'though it be an unlooked-for one.'

'A wilful man maun hae his way,' answered the old counsellor.

'The Keeper will rue this before year and day are out,' said a third; 'the Master of Ravenswood is the lad to wind him a pirn.'[1]

'Why, what would you do, my lords, with the poor young fellow?' said a noble Marquis present. 'The Lord Keeper has got all his estates; he has not a cross to bless himself with.'

On which the ancient Lord Turntippet replied,

'If he hasna gear to fine,
He has shins to pine.

And that was our way before the Revolution: *Luitur cum persona, qui luere non potest cum crumena.*[2] Hegh, my lords, that 's gude law Latin.'

'I can see no motive,' replied the Marquis, 'that any noble lord can have for urging this matter farther; let the Lord Keeper have the power to deal in it as he pleases.'

'Agree, agree — remit to the Lord Keeper, with any other person for fashion's sake — Lord Hirplehooly, who is bed-ridden — one to be a quorum. Make your entry in the minutes, Mr. Clerk. And now, my lords, there is that young scattergood the Laird of Bucklaw's fine to be disponed upon. I suppose it goes to my Lord Treasurer?'

'Shame be in my meal-poke, then,' exclaimed Lord Turntippet, 'and your hand aye in the nook of it! I had set that down for a bye-bit between meals for myself.'

'To use one of your favourite saws, my lord,' replied the Marquis, 'you are like the miller's dog, that licks his lips before the bag is untied: the man is not fined yet.'

'But that costs but twa skarts of a pen,' said Lord Turntippet; 'and surely there is nae noble lord that will presume to say that I, wha hae complied wi' a' compliances, taen all manner of tests, abjured all that was to be abjured, and sworn

[1] *Wind him a pirn*, proverbial for preparing a troublesome business for some person.

[2] i. e., Let him pay with his person who cannot pay with his purse.

a' that was to be sworn, for these thirty years bye-past, sticking fast by my duty to the state through good report and bad report, shouldna hae something now and then to synd my mouth wi' after sic drouthy wark? Eh?'

'It would be very unreasonable indeed, my lord,' replied the Marquis, 'had we either thought that your lordship's drought was quenchable, or observed anything stick in your throat that required washing down.'

And so we close the scene on the privy council of that period.

CHAPTER VI

For this are all these warriors come,
To hear an idle tale;
And o'er our death-accustom'd arms
Shall silly tears prevail!

HENRY MACKENZIE.

ON the evening of the day when the Lord Keeper and his daughter were saved from such imminent peril, two strangers were seated in the most private apartment of a small obscure inn, or rather alehouse, called the Tod's Den, about three or four miles from the Castle of Ravenswood and as far from the ruinous tower of Wolf's Crag, betwixt which two places it was situated.

One of these strangers was about forty years of age, tall, and thin in the flanks, with an aquiline nose, dark penetrating eyes, and a shrewd but sinister cast of countenance. The other was about fifteen years younger, short, stout, ruddy-faced, and red-haired, with an open, resolute, and cheerful eye, to which careless and fearless freedom and inward daring gave fire and expression, notwithstanding its light grey colour. A stoup of wine (for in those days it was served out from the cask in pewter flagons) was placed on the table, and each had his quaigh or bicker[1] before him. But there was little appearance of conviviality. With folded arms, and looks of anxious expectation, they eyed each other in silence, each wrapt in his own thoughts, and holding no communication with his neighbour. At length the younger broke silence by exclaiming, 'What the foul fiend can detain the Master so long? He must have miscarried in his enterprise. Why did you dissuade me from going with him?'

'One man is enough to right his own wrong,' said the taller

[1] Drinking cups of different sizes, made out of staves hooped together. The *quaigh* was used chiefly for drinking wine or brandy; it might hold about a gill, and was often composed of rare wood, and curiously ornamented with silver.

and older personage; 'we venture our lives for him in coming thus far on such an errand.'

'You are but a craven after all, Craigengelt,' answered the younger, 'and that 's what many folk have thought you before now.'

'But what none has dared to tell me,' said Craigengelt, laying his hand on the hilt of his sword; 'and, but that I hold a hasty man no better than a fool, I would ——' he paused for his companion's answer.

'*Would* you?' said the other, coolly; 'and why do you not then?'

Craigengelt drew his cutlass an inch or two, and then returned it with violence into the scabbard — 'Because there is a deeper stake to be played for than the lives of twenty harebrained gowks like you.'

'You are right there,' said his companion, 'for if it were not that these forfeitures, and that last fine that the old driveller Turntippet is gaping for, and which, I daresay, is laid on by this time, have fairly driven me out of house and home, I were a coxcomb and a cuckoo to boot to trust your fair promises of getting me a commission in the Irish brigade. What have I to do with the Irish brigade? I am a plain Scotchman, as my father was before me; and my grand-aunt, Lady Girnington, cannot live for ever.'

'Ay, Bucklaw,' observed Craigengelt, 'but she may live for many a long day; and for your father, he had land and living, kept himself close from wadsetters and money-lenders, paid each man his due, and lived on his own.'

'And whose fault is it that I have not done so too?' said Bucklaw — 'whose but the devil's and yours, and such-like as you, that have led me to the far end of a fair estate? And now I shall be obliged, I suppose, to shelter and shift about like yourself: live one week upon a line of secret intelligence from Saint Germains; another upon a report of a rising in the Highlands; get my breakfast and morning draught of sack from old Jacobite ladies, and give them locks of my old wig for the Chevalier's hair; second my friend in his quarrel till he comes to the field, and then flinch from him lest so important a political agent should perish from the way. All this I must do for bread, besides calling myself a captain!'

'You think you are making a fine speech now,' said Craigengelt, 'and showing much wit at my expense. Is starving or hanging better than the life I am obliged to lead, because the present fortunes of the king cannot sufficiently support his envoys?'

'Starving is honester, Craigengelt, and hanging is like to be the end on 't. But what you mean to make of this poor fellow Ravenswood, I know not. He has no money left, any more than I; his lands are all pawned and pledged, and the interest eats up the rents, and is not satisfied, and what do you hope to make by meddling in his affairs?'

'Content yourself, Bucklaw; I know my business,' replied Craigengelt. 'Besides that his name, and his father's services in 1689, will make such an acquisition sound well both at Versailles and Saint Germains, you will also please be informed that the Master of Ravenswood is a very different kind of a young fellow from you. He has parts and address, as well as courage and talents, and will present nself abroad like a young man of head as well as heart, who knows something more than the speed of a horse or the flight of a hawk. I have lost credit of late, by bringing over no one that had sense to know more than how to unharbour a stag, or take and reclaim an eyas. The Master has education, sense, and penetration.'

'And yet is not wise enough to escape the tricks of a kidnapper, Craigengelt?' replied the younger man. 'But don't be angry; you know you will not fight, and so it is as well to leave your hilt in peace and quiet, and tell me in sober guise how you drew the Master into your confidence?'

'By flattering his love of vengeance, Bucklaw,' answered Craigengelt. 'He has always distrusted me; but I watched my time, and struck while his temper was red-hot with the sense of insult and of wrong. He goes now to expostulate, as he says, and perhaps thinks, with Sir William Ashton. I say, that if they meet, and the lawyer puts him to his defence, the Master will kill him; for he had that sparkle in his eye which never deceives you when you would read a man's purpose. At any rate, he will give him such a bullying as will be construed into an assault on a privy councillor; so there will be a total breach betwixt him and government. Scotland will be too hot for him; France will gain him; and we will all set sail together in the French brig "L'Espoir," which is hovering for us off Eyemouth.'

'Content am I,' said Bucklaw; 'Scotland has little left that I care about; and if carrying the Master with us will get us a better reception in France, why, so be it, a God's name. I doubt our own merits will procure us slender preferment; and I trust he will send a ball through the Keeper's head before he joins us. One or two of these scoundrel statesman should be

shot once a-year, just to keep the others on their good behaviour.'

'That is very true,' replied Craigengelt; 'and it reminds me that I must go and see that our horses have been fed, and are in readiness; for, should such deed be done, it will be no time for grass to grow beneath their heels.' He proceeded as far as the door, then turned back with a look of earnestness, and said to Bucklaw, 'Whatever should come of this business, I am sure you will do me the justice to remember that I said nothing to the Master which could imply my accession to any act of violence which he may take it into his head to commit.

'No, no, not a single word like accession,' replied Bucklaw; 'you know too well the risk belonging to these two terrible words, "art and part."' Then, as if to himself, he recited the following lines:—

> 'The dial spoke not, but it made shrewd signs,
> And pointed full upon the stroke of murder.'

'What is that you are talking to yourself?' said Craigengelt, turning back with some anxiety.

'Nothing, only two lines I have heard upon the stage,' replied his companion.

'Bucklaw,' said Craigengelt, 'I sometimes think you should have been a stage-player yourself; all is fancy and frolic with you.'

'I have often thought so myself,' said Bucklaw. 'I believe it would be safer than acting with you in the Fatal Conspiracy. But away, play your own part, and look after the horses like a groom as you are. A play-actor — a stage-player!' he repeated to himself; 'that would have deserved a stab, but that Craigengelt 's a coward. And yet I should like the profession well enough. Stay, let me see; ay, I would come out in *Alexander* —

> 'Thus from the grave I rise to save my love,
> Draw all your swords, and quick as lightning move.
> When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay;
> 'T is love commands, and glory leads the way.'

As with a voice of thunder, and his hand upon his sword, Bucklaw repeated the ranting couplets of poor Lee, Craigengelt re-entered with a face of alarm.

'We are undone, Bucklaw! The Master's led horse has cast himself over his halter in the stable, and is dead lame. His

hackney will be set up with the day's work, and now he has no fresh horse; he will never get off.'

'Gad, there will be no moving with the speed of lightning this bout,' said Bucklaw, drily. 'But stay, you can give him yours.'

'What! and be taken myself? I thank you for the proposal,' said Craigengelt.

'Why,' replied Bucklaw, 'if the Lord Keeper should have met with a mischance, which for my part I cannot suppose, for the Master is not the lad to shoot an old and unarmed man — but *if* there should have been a fray at the Castle, you are neither art nor part in it, you know, so have nothing to fear.'

'True, true,' answered the other, with embarrassment; 'but consider my commission from Saint Germains.'

'Which many men think is a commission of your own making, noble Captain. Well, if you will not give him your horse, why, d—n it, he must have mine.'

'Yours?' said Craigengelt.

'Ay, mine,' repeated Bucklaw; 'it shall never be said that I agreed to back a gentleman in a little affair of honour, and neither helped him on with it nor off from it.'

'You will give him your horse? and have you considered the loss?'

'Loss! why, Grey Gilbert cost me twenty Jacobuses, that 's true; but then his hackney is worth something, and his Black Moor is worth twice as much were he sound, and I know how to handle him. Take a fat sucking mastiff whelp, flay and bowel him, stuff the body full of black and grey snails, roast a reasonable time, and baste with oil of spikenard, saffron, cinnamon, and honey, anoint with the dripping, working it in ——'

'Yes, Bucklaw; but in the meanwhile, before the sprain is cured, nay, before the whelp is roasted, you will be caught and hung. Depend on it, the chase will be hard after Ravenswood. I wish we had made our place of rendezvous nearer to the coast.'

'On my faith, then,' said Bucklaw, 'I had best go off just now, and leave my horse for him. Stay — stay, he comes: I hear a horse's feet.'

'Are you sure there is only one?' said Craigengelt. 'I fear there is a chase; I think I hear three or four galloping together I am sure I hear more horses than one.'

'Pooh, pooh, it is the wench of the house clattering to the well in her pattens. By my faith, Captain, you should give up both your captainship and your secret service, for you are as easily scared as a wild goose. But here comes the Master alone, and looking as gloomy as a night in November.'

The Master of Ravenswood entered the room accordingly, his cloak muffled around him, his arms folded, his looks stern, and at the same time dejected. He flung his cloak from him as he entered, threw himself upon a chair, and appeared sunk in a profound reverie.

'What has happened? What have you done?' was hastily demanded by Craigengelt and Bucklaw in the same moment.

'Nothing,' was the short and sullen answer.

'Nothing! and left us, determined to call the old villain to account for all the injuries that you, we, and the country have received at his hand? Have you seen him?'

'I have,' replied the Master of Ravenswood.

'Seen him — and come away without settling scores which have been so long due?' said Bucklaw; 'I would not have expected that at the hand of the Master of Ravenswood.'

'No matter what you expected,' replied Ravenswood; 'it is not to you, sir, that I shall be disposed to render any reason for my conduct.'

'Patience, Bucklaw,' said Craigengelt, interrupting his companion, who seemed about to make an angry reply. 'The Master has been interrupted in his purpose by some accident; but he must excuse the anxious curiosity of friends who are devoted to his cause like you and me.'

'Friends, Captain Craigengelt!' retorted Ravenswood, haughtily; 'I am ignorant what familiarity has passed betwixt us to entitle you to use that expression. I think our friendship amounts to this, that we agreed to leave Scotland together so soon as I should have visited the alienated mansion of my fathers, and had an interview with its present possessor — I will not call him proprietor.'

'Very true, Master,' answered Bucklaw; 'and as we thought you had a mind to do something to put your neck in jeopardy, Craigie and I very courteously agreed to tarry for you, although one might run some risk in consequence. As to Craigie, indeed, it does not very much signify: he had gallows written on his brow in the hour of his birth: but I should not like to discredit my parentage by coming to such an end in another man's cause.'

'Gentlemen,' said the Master of Ravenswood, 'I am sorry if

I have occasioned you any inconvenience, but I must claim the right of judging what is best for my own affairs, without rendering explanations to any one. I have altered my mind, and do not design to leave the country this season.'

'Not to leave the country, Master!' exclaimed Craigengelt. 'Not to go over, after all the trouble and expense I have incurred — after all the risk of discovery, and the expense of demurrage!'

'Sir,' replied the Master of Ravenswood, 'when I designed to leave this country in this haste, I made use of your obliging offer to procure me means of conveyance; but I do not recollect that I pledged myself to go off, if I found occasion to alter my mind. For your trouble on my account, I am sorry, and I thank you; your expense,' he added, putting his hand into his pocket, 'admits a more solid compensation: freight and demurrage are matters with which I am unacquainted, Captain Craigengelt, but take my purse and pay yourself according to your own conscience.' And accordingly he tendered a purse with some gold in it to the *soi-disant* captain.

But here Bucklaw interposed in his turn. 'Your fingers, Craigie, seem to itch for that same piece of green network,' said he; 'but I make my vow to God, that if they offer to close upon it, I will chop them off with my whinger. Since the Master has changed his mind, I suppose we need stay here no longer; but in the first place I beg leave to tell him ——'

'Tell him anything you will,' said Craigengelt, 'if you will first allow me to state the inconveniences to which he will expose himself by quitting our society, to remind him of the obstacles to his remaining here, and of the difficulties attending his proper introduction at Versailles and Saint Germains without the countenance of those who have established useful connexions.'

'Besides forfeiting the friendship,' said Bucklaw, 'of at least one man of spirit and honour.'

'Gentlemen,' said Ravenswood, 'permit me once more to assure you that you have been pleased to attach to our temporary connexion more importance than I ever meant that it should have. When I repair to foreign courts, I shall not need the introduction of an intriguing adventurer, nor is it necessary for me to set value on the friendship of a hot-headed bully.' With these words, and without waiting for an answer, he left the apartment, remounted his horse, and was heard to ride off.

'Mortbleu!' said Captain Craigengelt, 'my recruit is lost!'

'Ay, Captain,' said Bucklaw, 'the salmon is off with hook and

all. But I will after him, for I have had more of his insolence than I can well digest.'

Craigengelt offered to accompany him; but Bucklaw replied, 'No, no, Captain, keep you the cheek of the chimney-nook till I come back; it 's good sleeping in a haill skin.

> Little kens the auld wife that sits by the fire,
> How cauld the wind blaws in hurle-burle swire.'

And singing as he went, he left the apartment.

CHAPTER VII

Now, Billy Bewick, keep good heart,
And of thy talking let me be;
But if thou art a man, as I am sure thou art,
Come over the dike and fight with me.

Old Ballad.

THE Master of Ravenswood had mounted the ambling hackney which he before rode, on finding the accident which had happened to his led horse, and, for the animal's ease, was proceeding at a slow pace from the Tod's Den towards his old tower of Wolf's Crag,[1] when he heard the galloping of a horse behind him, and, looking back, perceived that he was pursued by young Bucklaw, who had been delayed a few minutes in the pursuit by the irresistible temptation of giving the hostler at the Tod's Den some recipe for treating the lame horse. This brief delay he had made up by hard galloping, and now overtook the Master where the road traversed a waste moor. 'Halt, sir,' cried Bucklaw; 'I am no political agent—no Captain Craigengelt, whose life is too important to be hazarded in defence of his honour. I am Frank Hayston of Bucklaw, and no man injures me by word, deed, sign, or look, but he must render me an account of it.'

'This is all very well, Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw,' replied the Master of Ravenswood, in a tone the most calm and indifferent; 'but I have no quarrel with you, and desire to have none. Our roads homeward, as well as our roads through life, lie in different directions; there is no occasion for us crossing each other.'

'Is there not?' said Bucklaw, impetuously. 'By Heaven! but I say that there is, though: you call us intriguing adventurers.'

'Be correct in your recollection, Mr. Hayston; it was to your companion only I applied that epithet, and you know him to be no better.'

[1] See Introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate* (*Laing*).

'And what then? He was my companion for the time, and no man shall insult my companion, right or wrong, while he is in my company.'

'Then, Mr. Hayston,' replied Ravenswood, with the same composure, 'you should choose your society better, or you are like to have much work in your capacity of their champion. Go home, sir; sleep, and have more reason in your wrath to-morrow.'

'Not so, Master, you have mistaken your man; high airs and wise saws shall not carry it off thus. Besides, you termed me bully, and you shall retract the word before we part.'

'Faith, scarcely,' said Ravenswood, 'unless you show me better reason for thinking myself mistaken than you are now producing.'

'Then, Master,' said Bucklaw, 'though I should be sorry to offer it to a man of your quality, if you will not justify your incivility, or retract it, or name a place of meeting, you must here undergo the hard word and the hard blow.'

'Neither will be necessary,' said Ravenswood; 'I am satisfied with what I have done to avoid an affair with you. If you are serious, this place will serve as well as another.'

'Dismount then, and draw,' said Bucklaw, setting him an example. 'I always thought and said you were a pretty man; I should be sorry to report you otherwise.'

'You shall have no reason, sir,' said Ravenswood, alighting, and putting himself into a posture of defence.

Their swords crossed, and the combat commenced with great spirit on the part of Bucklaw, who was well accustomed to affairs of the kind, and distinguished by address and dexterity at his weapon. In the present case, however, he did not use his skill to advantage; for, having lost temper at the cool and contemptuous manner in which the Master of Ravenswood had long refused, and at length granted, him satisfaction, and urged by his impatience, he adopted the part of an assailant with inconsiderate eagerness. The Master, with equal skill, and much greater composure, remained chiefly on the defensive, and even declined to avail himself of one or two advantages afforded him by the eagerness of his adversary. At length, in a desperate lunge, which he followed with an attempt to close, Bucklaw's foot slipped, and he fell on the short grassy turf on which they were fighting. 'Take your life, sir,' said the Master of Ravenswood, 'and mend it if you can.'

'It would be but a cobbled piece of work, I fear,' said Buck-

law, rising slowly and gathering up his sword, much less discomcerted with the issue of the combat than could have been expected from the impetuosity of his temper. 'I thank you for my life, Master,' he pursued. 'There is my hand; I bear no ill-will to you, either for my bad luck or your better swordmanship.'

The Master looked steadily at him for an instant, then extended his hand to him. 'Bucklaw,' he said, 'you are a generous fellow, and I have done you wrong. I heartily ask your pardon for the expression which offended you; it was hastily and incautiously uttered, and I am convinced it is totally misapplied.'

'Are you indeed, Master?' said Bucklaw, his face resuming at once its natural expression of light-hearted carelessness and audacity; 'that is more than I expected of you; for, Master, men say you are not ready to retract your opinions and your language.'

'Not when I have well considered them,' said the Master.

'Then you are a little wiser than I am, for I always give my friend satisfaction first, and explanation afterwards. If one of us falls, all accounts are settled; if not, men are never so ready for peace as after war. But what does that bawling brat of a boy want?' said Bucklaw. 'I wish to Heaven he had come a few minutes sooner! and yet it must have been ended some time, and perhaps this way is as well as any other.'

As he spoke, the boy he mentioned came up, cudgelling an ass, on which he was mounted, to the top of its speed, and sending, like one of Ossian's heroes, his voice before him—'Gentlemen—gentlemen, save yourselves! for the gudewife bade us tell ye there were folk in her house had taen Captain Craigengelt, and were seeking for Bucklaw, and that ye behoved to ride for it.'

'By my faith, and that 's very true, my man,' said Bucklaw; 'and there 's a silver sixpence for your news, and I would give any man twice as much would tell me which way I should ride.'

'That will I, Bucklaw,' said Ravenswood; 'ride home to Wolf's Crag with me. There are places in the old tower where you might lie hid, were a thousand men to seek you.'

'But that will bring you into trouble yourself, Master; and unless you be in the Jacobite scrape already, it is quite needless for me to drag you in.'

'Not a whit; I have nothing to fear.'

'Then I will ride with you blithely, for, to say the truth, I do not know the rendezvous that Craigie was to guide us to this night; and I am sure that, if he is taken, he will tell all the truth of me, and twenty lies of you, in order to save himself from the withie.'

They mounted and rode off in company accordingly, striking off the ordinary road, and holding their way by wild moorish unfrequented paths, with which the gentlemen were well acquainted from the exercise of the chase, but through which others would have had much difficulty in tracing their course. They rode for some time in silence, making such haste as the condition of Ravenswood's horse permitted, until night having gradually closed around them, they discontinued their speed, both from the difficulty of discovering their path, and from the hope that they were beyond the reach of pursuit or observation.

'And now that we have drawn bridle a bit,' said Bucklaw, 'I would fain ask you a question, Master.'

'Ask, and welcome,' said Ravenswood, 'but forgive my not answering it, unless I think proper.'

'Well, it is simply this,' answered his late antagonist: 'What, in the name of old Sathan, could make you, — so stand so highly on your reputation, think for a moment of drawing up with such a rogue as Craigengelt, and such a scapegrace as folk call Bucklaw?'

'Simply, because I was desperate, and sought desperate associates.'

'And what made you break off from us at the nearest?' again demanded Bucklaw.

'Because I had changed my mind,' said the Master, 'and renounced my enterprise, at least for the present. And now that I have answered your questions fairly and frankly, tell me what makes you associate with Craigengelt, so much beneath you both in birth and in spirit?'

'In plain terms,' answered Bucklaw, 'because I am a fool, who have gambled away my land in these times. My grand-aunt, Lady Girnington, has taen a new tack of life, I think, and I could only hope to get something by a change of government. Craigie was a sort of gambling acquaintance; he saw my condition, and, as the devil is always at one's elbow, told me fifty lies about his credentials from Versailles, and his interest at Saint Germains, promised me a captain's commission at Paris, and I have been ass enough to put my thumb under

his belt. I daresay, by this time, he has told a dozen pretty stories of me to the government. And this is what I have got by wine, woman, and dice, cocks, dogs, and horses.'

'Yes, Bucklaw,' said the Master, 'you have indeed nourished in your bosom the snakes that are now stinging you.'

'That 's home as well as true, Master,' replied his companion; 'but, by your leave, you have nursed in your bosom one great goodly snake that has swallowed all the rest, and is as sure to devour you as my half-dozen are to make a meal on all that 's left of Bucklaw, which is but what lies between bonnet and boot-heel.'

'I must not,' answered the Master of Ravenswood, 'challenge the freedom of speech in which I have set example. What, to speak without a metaphor, do you call this monstrous passion which you charge me with fostering?'

'Revenge, my good sir — revenge; which, if it be as gentlemanlike a sin as wine and wassail, with their *et cæteras*, is equally unchristian, and not so bloodless. It is better breaking a park-pale to watch a doe or damsel than to shoot an old man.'

'I deny the purpose,' said the Master of Ravenswood. 'On my soul, I had no such intention; I meant but to confront the oppressor ere I left my native land, and upbraid him with his tyranny and its consequences. I would have stated my wrongs so that they would have shaken his soul within him.'

'Yes,' answered Bucklaw, 'and he would have collared you, and cried "help," and then you would have shaken the soul *out* of him, I suppose. Your very look and manner would have frightened the old man to death.'

'Consider the provocation,' answered Ravenswood — 'consider the ruin and death procured and caused by his hard-hearted cruelty — an ancient house destroyed, an affectionate father murdered! Why, in our old Scottish days, he that sat quiet under such wrongs would have been held neither fit to back a friend nor face a foe.'

'Well, Master, I am glad to see that the devil deals as cunningly with other folk as he deals with me; for whenever I am about to commit any folly, he persuades me it is the most necessary, gallant, gentlemanlike thing on earth, and I am up to saddlegirths in the bog before I see that the ground is soft. And you, Master, might have turned out a murd —— a homicide, just out of pure respect for your father's memory.'

'There is more sense in your language, Bucklaw,' replied

the Master, 'than might have been expected from your conduct. It is too true, our vices steal upon us in forms outwardly as fair as those of the demons whom the superstitious represent as intriguing with the human race, and are not discovered in their native hideousness until we have clasped them in our arms.'

'But we may throw them from us, though,' said Bucklaw, 'and that is what I shall think of doing one of these days — that is, when old Lady Girnington dies.'

'Did you ever hear the expression of the English divine?' said Ravenswood — '"Hell is paved with good intentions," — as much as to say, they are more often formed than executed.'

'Well,' replied Bucklaw, 'but I will begin this blessed night, and have determined not to drink above one quart of wine, unless your claret be of extraordinary quality.'

'You will find little to tempt you at Wolf's Crag,' said the Master. 'I know not that I can promise you more than the shelter of my roof; all, and more than all, our stock of wine and provisions was exhausted at the late occasion.'

'Long may it be ere provision is needed for the like purpose,' answered Bucklaw; 'but you should not drink up the last flask at a dirge; there is ill luck in that.'

'There is ill luck, I think, in whatever belongs to me,' said Ravenswood. 'But yonder is Wolf's Crag, and whatever it still contains is at your service.'

The roar of the sea had long announced their approach to the cliffs, on the summit of which, like the nest of some sea-eagle, the founder of the fortalice had perched his eyrie. The pale moon, which had hitherto been contending with flitting clouds, now shone out, and gave them a view of the solitary and naked tower, situated on a projecting cliff that beetled on the German Ocean. On three sides the rock was precipitous; on the fourth, which was that towards the land, it had been originally fenced by an artificial ditch and drawbridge, but the latter was broken down and ruinous, and the former had been in part filled up, so as to allow passage for a horseman into the narrow courtyard, encircled on two sides with low offices and stables, partly ruinous, and closed on the landward front by a low embattled wall, while the remaining side of the quadrangle was occupied by the tower itself, which, tall and narrow, and built of a greyish stone, stood glimmering in the moonlight, like the sheeted spectre of some huge giant. A wilder or more disconsolate dwelling it was perhaps difficult to conceive. The

sombrous and heavy sound of the billows, successively dashing against the rocky beach at a profound distance beneath, was to the ear what the landscape was to the eye — a symbol of unvaried and monotonous melancholy, not unmingled with horror.

Although the night was not far advanced, there was no sign of living inhabitant about this forlorn abode, excepting that one, and only one, of the narrow and stanchelled windows which appeared at irregular heights and distances in the walls of the building showed a small glimmer of light.

'There,' said Ravenswood, 'sits the only male domestic that remains to the house of Ravenswood; and it is well that he does remain there, since otherwise we had little hope to find either light or fire. But follow me cautiously; the road is narrow, and admits only one horse in front.'

In effect, the path led along a kind of isthmus, at the peninsular extremity of which the tower was situated, with that exclusive attention to strength and security, in preference to every circumstance of convenience, which dictated to the Scottish barons the choice of their situations, as well as their style of building.

By adopting the cautious mode of approach recommended by the proprietor of this wild hold, they entered the courtyard in safety. But it was long ere the efforts of Ravenswood, though loudly exerted by knocking at the low-browed entrance, and repeated shouts to Caleb to open the gate and admit them, received any answer.

'The old man must be departed,' he began to say, 'or fallen into some fit; for the noise I have made would have waked the seven sleepers.'

At length a timid and hesitating voice replied, 'Master — Master of Ravenswood, is it you?'

'Yes, it is I, Caleb; open the door quickly.'

'But is it you in very blood and body? For I would sooner face fifty deevils as my master's ghaist, or even his wraith; wherefore, aroint ye, if ye were ten times my master, unless ye come in bodily shape, lith and limb.'

'It is I, you old fool,' answered Ravenswood, 'in bodily shape and alive, save that I am half dead with cold.'

The light at the upper window disappeared, and glancing from loophole to loophole in slow succession, gave intimation that the bearer was in the act of descending, with great deliberation, a winding staircase occupying one of the turrets

which graced the angles of the old tower. The tardiness of his descent extracted some exclamations of impatience from Ravenswood, and several oaths from his less patient and more mercurial companion. Caleb again paused ere he unbolted the door, and once more asked if they were men of mould that demanded entrance at this time of night.

'Were I near you, you old fool,' said Bucklaw, 'I would give you sufficient proofs of *my* bodily condition.'

'Open the gate, Caleb,' said his master, in a more soothing tone, partly from his regard to the ancient and faithful seneschal, partly perhaps because he thought that angry words would be thrown away, so long as Caleb had a stout iron-clenched oaken door betwixt his person and the speakers.

At length Caleb, with a trembling hand, undid the bars, opened the heavy door, and stood before them, exhibiting his thin grey hairs, bald forehead, and sharp high features, illuminated by a quivering lamp which he held in one hand, while he shaded and protected its flame with the other. The timorous, courteous glance which he threw around him, the effect of the partial light upon his white hair and illumined features, might have made a good painting; but our travellers were too impatient for security against the rising storm to permit them to indulge themselves in studying the picturesque. 'Is it you, my dear master? — is it you yourself, indeed?' exclaimed the old domestic. 'I am wae ye suld hae stude waiting at your ain gate; but wha wad hae thought o' seeing ye sae sune, and a strange gentleman with a —— (Here he exclaimed apart, as it were, and to some inmate of the tower, in a voice not meant to be heard by those in the court) Mysie — Mysie, woman! stir for dear life, and get the fire mended; take the auld three-legged stool, or ony thing that 's readiest that will make a lowe. I doubt we are but puirly provided, no expecting ye this some months, when doubtless ye wad hae been received conform till your rank, as gude right is; but natheless ——'

'Natheless, Caleb,' said the Master, 'we must have our horses put up, and ourselves too, the best way we can. I hope you are not sorry to see me sooner than you expected?'

'Sorry, my lord! I am sure ye sall aye be my lord wi' honest folk, as your noble ancestors hae been these three hundred years, and never asked a Whig's leave. Sorry to see the Lord of Ravenswood at ane o' his ain castles! (Then again apart to his unseen associate behind the screen) Mysie, kill the brood-hen without thinking twice on it; let them care that

come ahint. No to say it 's our best dwelling,' he added, turning to Bucklaw; 'but just a strength for the Lord of Ravenswood to flee until — that is, not to *flee*, but to retreat until in troublous times, like the present, when it was ill convenient for him to live farther in the country in ony of his better and mair principal manors; but, for its antiquity, maist folk think that the outside of Wolf's Crag is worthy of a large perusal.'

'And you are determined we shall have time to make it,' said Ravenswood, somewhat amused with the shifts the old man used to detain them without doors until his confederate Mysie had made her preparations within.

'O, never mind the outside of the house, my good friend,' said Bucklaw; 'let 's see the inside, and let our horses see the stable, that 's all.'

'O yes, sir — ay, sir — unquestionably, sir — my lord and ony of his honourable companions ——'

'But our horses, my old friend — our horses; they will be dead-foundered by standing here in the cold after riding hard, and mine is too good to be spoiled; therefore, once more, our horses,' exclaimed Bucklaw.

'T. 3 — ay — your horses — yes — I will call the grooms'; and sturdily did Caleb roar till the old tower rang again — 'John William — Saunders! The lads are gane out, or sleeping,' he observed, after pausing for an answer, which he knew that he had no human chance of receiving. 'A' gaes wrang when the Master 's out-bye; but I 'll take care o' your cattle mysell.'

'I think you had better,' said Ravenswood, 'otherwise I see little chance of their being attended to at all.'

'Whisht, my lord — whisht, for God's sake,' said Caleb, in an imploring tone, and apart to his master; 'if ye dinna regard your ain credit, think on mine; we 'll hae hard eneugh wark to mak a decent night o't, wi' a' the lees can tell.'

'Well, well, never mind,' said his master; 'go to the stable. There is hay and corn, I trust?'

'Ou ay, plenty of hay and corn'; this was uttered boldly and aloud, and, in a lower tone, 'there was some half fous o' aits, and some taits o' meadow-hay, left after the burial.'

'Very well,' said Ravenswood, taking the lamp from his domestic's unwilling hand, 'I will show the stranger upstairs myself.'

'I canna think o' that, my lord; if ye wad but have five minutes', or ten minutes', or, at maist, a quarter of an hour's patience, and look at the fine moonlight prospect of the Bass

and North Berwick Law till I sort the horses, I would marshal ye up, as reason is ye suld be marshalled, your lordship and your honourable visitor. And I hae lockit up the siller candlesticks, and the lamp is not fit ——'

'It will do very well in the meantime,' said Ravenswood, 'and you will have no difficulty for want of light in the stable, for, if I recollect, half the roof is off.'

'Very true, my lord,' replied the trusty adherent, and with ready wit instantly added, 'and the lazy sclater loons have never come to put it on a' this while, your lordship.'

'If I were disposed to jest at the calamities of my house,' said Ravenswood, as he led the way upstairs, 'poor old Caleb would furnish me with ample means. His passion consists in representing things about our miserable menage, not as they are, but as, in his opinion, they ought to be; and, to say the truth, I have been often diverted with the poor wretch's expedients to supply what he thought was essential for the credit of the family, and his still more generous apologies for the want of those articles for which his ingenuity could discover no substitute. But though the tower is none of the largest, I shall have some trouble without him to find the apartment in which there is a fire.'

As he spoke thus, he opened the door of the hall. 'Here, at least,' he said, 'there is neither hearth nor harbour.'

It was indeed a scene of desolation. A large vaulted room, the beams of which, combined like those of Westminster Hall, were rudely carved at the extremities, remained nearly in the situation in which it had been left after the entertainment at Allan Lord Ravenswood's funeral. Overturned pitchers, and black-jacks, and pewter stoups, and flagons still encumbered the large oaken table; glasses, those more perishable implements of conviviality, many of which had been voluntarily sacrificed by the guests in their enthusiastic pledges to favourite toasts, strewed the stone floor with their fragments. As for the articles of plate, lent for the purpose by friends and kinsfolk, those had been carefully withdrawn so soon as the ostentatious display of festivity, equally unnecessary and strangely timed, had been made and ended. Nothing, in short, remained that indicated wealth; all the signs were those of recent wastefulness and present desolation. The black cloth hangings, which, on the late mournful occasion, replaced the tattered moth eaten tapestries, had been partly pulled down, and, dangling from the wall in irregular festoons, disclosed the rough stonework

of the building, unsmoothed either by plaster or the chisel. The seats thrown down, or left in disorder, intimated the careless confusion which had concluded the mournful revel. 'This room,' said Ravenswood, holding up the lamp —'this room, Mr. Hayston, was riotous when it should have been sad; it is a just retribution that it should now be sad when it ought to be cheerful.'

They left this disconsolate apartment, and went upstairs, where, after opening one or two doors in vain, Ravenswood led the way into a little matted ante-room, in which, to their great joy, they found a tolerably good fire, which Mysie, by some such expedient as Caleb had suggested, had supplied with a reasonable quantity of fuel. Glad at the heart to see more of comfort than the castle had yet seemed to offer, Bucklaw rubbed his hands heartily over the fire, and now listened with more complacency to the apologies which the Master of Ravenswood offered. 'Comfort,' he said, 'I cannot provide for you, for I have it not for myself; it is long since these walls have known it, if, indeed, they were ever acquainted with it. Shelter and safety, I think, I can promise you.'

'Excellent matters, Master,' replied Bucklaw, 'and, with a mouthful of food and wine, positively all I can require to-night.'

'I fear,' said the Master, 'your supper will be a poor one; I hear the matter in discussion betwixt Caleb and Mysie. Poor Balderstone is something deaf, amongst his other accomplishments, so that much of what he means should be spoken aside is overheard by the whole audience, and especially by those from whom he is most anxious to conceal his private manœuvres. Hark!'

They listened, and heard the old domestic's voice in conversation with Mysie to the following effect: —

'Just mak the best o't —mak the best o't, woman; it 's easy to put a fair face on ony thing.'

'But the auld brood-hen? She 'll be as teugh as bow-strings and bend-leather!'

'Say ye made a mistake — say ye made a mistake, Mysie,' replied the faithful seneschal, in a soothing and undertoned voice; 'tak it a' on yoursell; never let the credit o' the house suffer.'

'But the brood-hen,' remonstrated Mysie —'ou, she 's sitting some gate aneath the dais in the hall, and I am feared to gae in in the dark for the bogle; and if I didna see the bogle, I

could as ill see the hen, for it 's pit-mirk, and there 's no another light in the house, save that very blessed lamp whilk the Master has in his ain hand. And if I had the hen, she 's to pu', and to draw, and to dress; how can I do that, and them sitting by the only fire we have?'

'Weel, weel, Mysie,' said the butler, 'bide ye there a wee, and I 'll try to get the lamp wiled away frae them.'

Accordingly, Caleb Balderstone entered the apartment, little aware that so much of his by-play had been audible there. 'Well, Caleb, my old friend, is there any chance of supper' said the Master of Ravenswood.

'*Chance* of supper, your lordship?' said Caleb, with an emphasis of strong scorn at the implied doubt. 'How should there be ony question of that, and us in your lordship's house? Chance of supper, indeed! But ye 'll no be for butcher meat! There 's walth o' fat poultry, ready either for spit or brander. The fat capon, Mysie!' he added, calling out as boldly as if such a thing had been in existence.

'Quite unnecessary,' said Bucklaw, who deemed himself bound in courtesy to relieve some part of the anxious butler's perplexity, 'if you have anything cold, or a morsel of bread.'

'The best of bannocks!' exclaimed Caleb, much relieved: 'and, for cauld meat, a' that we hae is cauld eneugh, howbeit, maist of the cauld meat and pastry was gien to the puir folk after the ceremony of interment, as gude reason was: nevertheless ——'

'Come, Caleb,' said the Master of Ravenswood, 'I must cut this matter short. This is the young Laird of Bucklaw: he is under hiding, and therefore, you know ——'

'He 'll be nae nicer than your lordship's honour, I'se warrant,' answered Caleb, cheerfully, with a nod of intelligence; 'I am sorry that the gentleman is under distress, but I am blithe that he canna say muckle agane our housekeeping, for I believe his ain pinches may match ours; no that we are pinched, thank God,' he added, retracting the admission which he had made in his first burst of joy, 'but nae doubt we are waur aff than we hae been, or suld be. And for eating — what signifies telling a lee? there 's just the hinder end of the mutton-ham that has been but three times on the table, and the nearer the bane the sweeter, as your honours weel ken: and — there 's the heel of the ewe-milk kebbuck, wi' a bit of nice butter, and — and — that 's a that 's to trust to.' And with great alacrity he produced his slender

stock of provisions, and placed them with much formality upon a small round table betwixt the two gentlemen, who were not deterred either by the homely quality or limited quantity of the repast from doing it full justice. Caleb in the meanwhile waited on them with grave officiousness, as if anxious to make up, by his own respectful assiduity, for the want of all other attendance.

But, alas! how little on such occasions can form, however anxiously and scrupulously observed, supply the lack of substantial fare! Bucklaw, who had eagerly eaten a considerable portion of the thrice-sacked mutton-ham, now began to demand ale.

'I wadna just presume to recommend our ale,' said Caleb; 'the maut was ill made, and there was awfu' thunner last week; but siccan water as the Tower well has ye'll seldom see, Bucklaw, and that I'se engage for.'

'But if your ale is bad, you can let us have some wine,' said Bucklaw, making a grimace at the mention of the pure element which Caleb so earnestly recommended.

'Wine!' answered Caleb, undauntedly, 'enough of wine! It was but twa days syne — wae's me for the cause — there was as much wine drunk in this house as would have floated a pinnace. There never was lack of wine at Wolf's Crag.'

'Do fetch us some then,' said his master, 'instead of talking about it.' And Caleb boldly departed.

Every expended butt in the old cellar did he set a-tilt, and shake with the desperate expectation of collecting enough of the grounds of claret to fill the large pewter measure which he carried in his hand. Alas! each had been too devoutly drained; and, with all the squeezing and manœuvring which his craft as a butler suggested, he could only collect about half a quart that seemed presentable. Still, however, Caleb was too good a general to renounce the field without a stratagem to cover his retreat. He undauntedly threw down an empty flagon, as if he had stumbled at the entrance of the apartment, called upon Mysie to wipe up the wine that had never been spilt, and placing the other vessel on the table, hoped there was still enough left for their honours. There was indeed: for even Bucklaw, a sworn friend to the grape, found no encouragement to renew his first attack on the vintage of Wolf's Crag, but contented himself, however reluctantly, with a draught of fair water. Arrangements were now made for his repose: and as the secret chamber was assigned for this purpose, it furnished

Caleb with a first-rate and most plausible apology for all deficiencies of furniture, bedding, etc.

'For wha,' said he, 'would have thought of the secret chaumer being needed? It has not been used since the time of the Gowrie Conspiracy, and I durst never let a woman ken of the entrance to it, or your honour will allow that it wad not hae been a secret chaumer lang.'

CHAPTER VIII

'The hearth in hall was black and dead,
No board was dight in bower within,
For merry bowl, nor welcome bed;
'Here's sorry cheer,' quoth the Heir of Linne.

Old Ballad.

THE feelings of the prodigal Heir of Linne, as expressed in that excellent old song, when, after dissipating his whole fortune, he found himself the deserted inhabitant of 'the lonely lodge,' might perhaps have some resemblance to those of the Master of Ravenswood in his deserted mansion of Wolf's Crag. The Master, however, had this advantage over the spendthrift in the legend, that, if he was in similar distress, he could not impute it to his own imprudence. His misery had been bequeathed to him by his father, and, joined to his high blood, and to a title which the courteous might give or the churlish withhold at their pleasure, it was the whole inheritance he had derived from his ancestry.

Perhaps this melancholy yet consolatory reflection crossed the mind of the unfortunate young nobleman with a breathing of comfort. Favourable to calm reflection, as well as to the Muses, the morning, while it dispelled the shades of night, had a composing and sedative effect upon the stormy passions by which the Master of Ravenswood had been agitated on the preceding day. He now felt himself able to analyse the different feelings by which he was agitated, and much resolved to combat and to subdue them. The morning, which had arisen calm and bright, gave a pleasant effect even to the waste moorland view which was seen from the castle on looking to the landward; and the glorious ocean, crisped with a thousand rippling waves of silver, extended on the other side, in awful yet complacent majesty, to the verge of the horizon. With such scenes of calm sublimity the human heart sympathises even in its most disturbed moods, and deeds of honour and virtue are inspired by their majestic influence.

To seek out Bucklaw in the retreat which he had afforded him was the first occupation of the Master, after he had performed, with a scrutiny unusually severe, the important task of self-examination. 'How now, Bucklaw?' was his morning's salutation — 'how like you the couch in which the exiled Earl of Angus once slept in security, when he was pursued by the full energy of a king's resentment?'

'Umph!' returned the sleeper awakened; 'I have little to complain of where so great a man was quartered before me, only the mattress was of the hardest, the vault somewhat damp, the rats rather more mutinous than I would have expected from the state of Caleb's larder; and if there had been shutters to that grated window, or a curtain to the bed, I should think it, upon the whole, an improvement in your accommodations.'

'It is, to be sure, forlorn enough,' said the Master, looking around the small vault; 'but if you will rise and leave it, Caleb will endeavour to find you a better breakfast than your supper of last night.'

'Pray, let it be no better,' said Bucklaw, getting up, and endeavouring to dress himself as well as the obscurity of the place would permit — 'let it, I say, be no better, if you mean me to persevere in my proposed reformation. The very recollection of Caleb's beverage has done more to suppress my longing to open the day with a morning draught than twenty sermons would have done. And you, Master, have you been able to give battle valiantly to your bosom-snake? You see I am in the way of smothering my vipers one by one.'

'I have commenced the battle, at least, Bucklaw, and I have had a fair vision of an angel who descended to my assistance,' replied the Master.

'Woe's me!' said his guest, 'no vision can I expect, unless my aunt, Lady Girnington, should betake herself to the tomb; and then it would be the substance of her heritage rather than the appearance of her phantom that I should consider as the support of my good resolutions. But this same breakfast, Master — does the deer that is to make the pasty run yet on foot, as the ballad has it?'

'I will inquire into that matter,' said his entertainer; and, leaving the apartment, he went in search of Caleb, whom, after some difficulty, he found in an obscure sort of dungeon, which had been in former times the buttery of the castle. Here the old man was employed busily in the doubtful task of burnishing a pewter flagon until it should take the hue and semblance of

silver-plate. 'I think it may do — I think it might pass, if they winna bring it ower muckle in the light o' the window!' were the ejaculations which he muttered from time to time, as if to encourage himself in his undertaking, when he was interrupted by the voice of his master.

'Take this,' said the Master of Ravenswood, 'and get what is necessary for the family.' And with these words he gave to the old butler the purse which had on the preceding evening so narrowly escaped the fangs of Craigengelt.

The old man shook his silvery and thin locks, and looked with an expression of the most heartfelt anguish at his master as he weighed in his hand the slender treasure, and said in a sorrowful voice, 'And is this a' that 's left?'

'All that is left at present,' said the Master, affecting more cheerfulness than perhaps he really felt, 'is just the green purse and the wee pickle gowd, as the old song says; but we shall do better one day, Caleb.'

'Before that day comes,' said Caleb, 'I doubt there will be an end of an auld sang, and an auld serving-man to boot. But it disna become me to speak that gate to your honour, and you looking sae pale. Tak back the purse, and keep it to be making a show before company; for if your honour would just tak a bidding, and be whiles taking it out afore folk and putting it up again, there 's naebody would refuse us trust, for a' that 's come and gane yet.'

'But, Caleb,' said the Master, 'I still intend to leave this country very soon, and I desire to do so with the reputation of an honest man, leaving no debt behind me, at least of my own contracting.'

'And [illegible]right ye suld gang away as a true man, and so ye shall, [illegible] Caleb can tak the wyte of whatever is taen on for the [illegible] and then it will be a' just ae man's burden; and I will [illegible]e just as weel in the tolbooth as out of it, and the credit of the family will be a' safe and sound.'

The Master endeavoured, in vain, to make Caleb comprehend that the butler's incurring the responsibility of debts in his own person would rather add to than remove the objections which he had to their being contracted. He spoke to a premier too busy in devising ways and means to puzzle himself with refuting the arguments offered against their justice or expediency.

'There 's Eppie Sma'trash will trust us for ale,' said Caleb to himself [illegible]she has lived a' her life under the family — and maybe wi' a soup brandy; I canna say for wine — she is but a

lone woman, and gets her claret by a runlet at a time; but I'll work a wee drap out o' her by fair means or foul. For doos, there 's the doocot; there will be poultry amang the tenants, though Luckie Chirnside says she has paid the kain twice ower. We 'll mak shift, an it like your honour - we 'll mak shift; keep your heart abune, for the house sall hand its credit as lang as auld Caleb is to the fore.'

The entertainment which the old man's exertions of various kinds enabled him to present to the young gentlemen for three or four days was certainly of no splendid description, but it may readily be believed it was set before no critical guests; and even the distresses, excuses, evasions, and shifts of Caleb afforded amusement to the young men, and added a of interest to the scrambling and irregular style of their able. They had indeed occasion to seize on every circumstance that might serve to diversify or enliven time, which otherwise passed away so heavily.

Bucklaw, shut out from his usual field-sports and joyous carouses by the necessity of remaining concealed within the walls of the castle, became a joyless and uninteresting companion. When the Master of Ravenswood would no longer fence or play at shovel-board; when he himself had polished to the extremity the coat of his palfrey with brush, currycomb, and hair-cloth; when he had seen him eat his provender, and gently lie down in his stall, he could hardly help envying the animal's apparent acquiescence in a life so monotonous. 'The stupid brute,' he said, 'thinks neither of the race-ground or the hunting-field, or his green paddock at Bucklaw, but enjoys himself as comfortably when haltered to the rack in this ruinous vault, as if he had been foaled in it; and I, who have the freedom of a prisoner at large, to range through the dungeons of this wretched old tower, can hardly, betwixt whistling and sleeping, contrive to pass away the hour till dinner-time.'

And with this disconsolate reflection, he wended his way to the bartizan or battlements of the tower, to watch what objects might appear on the distant moor, or to pelt, with pebbles and pieces of lime, the sea-mews and cormorants which established themselves incautiously within the reach of an idle young man.

Ravenswood, with a mind incalculably deeper and more powerful than that of his companion, had his own anxious subjects of reflection, which wrought for him the same unhappiness that sheer *ennui* and want of occupation inflicted on his companion. The first sight of Lucy Ashton had been less

impressive than her image proved to be upon reflection. As the depth and violence of that revengeful passion by which he had been actuated in seeking an interview with the father began to abate by degrees, he looked back on his conduct towards the daughter as harsh and unworthy towards a female of rank and beauty. Her looks of grateful acknowledgment, her words of affectionate courtesy, had been repelled with something which approached to disdain; and if the Master of Ravenswood had sustained wrongs at the hand of Sir William Ashton, his conscience told him they had been unhandsomely resented towards his daughter. When his thoughts took this turn of self-reproach, the recollection of Lucy Ashton's beautiful features, rendered yet more interesting by the circumstances in which their meeting had taken place, made an impression upon his mind at once soothing and painful. The sweetness of her voice, the delicacy of her expressions, the vivid glow of her filial affection, embittered his regret at having repulsed her gratitude with rudeness, while, at the same time, they placed before his imagination a picture of the most seducing sweetness.

Even young Ravenswood's strength of moral feeling and rectitude of purpose at once increased the danger of cherishing these recollections, and the propensity to entertain them. Firmly resolved as he was to subdue, if possible, the predominating vice in his character, he admitted with willingness — nay, he summoned up in his imagination — the ideas by which it could be most powerfully counteracted; and, while he did so, a sense of his own harsh conduct towards the daughter of his enemy naturally induced him, as if by way of recompense, to invest her with more of grace and beauty than perhaps she could actually claim.

Had any one at this period told the Master of Ravenswood that he had so lately vowed vengeance against the whole lineage of him whom he considered, not unjustly, as author of his father's ruin and death, he might at first have repelled the charge as a foul calumny; yet, upon serious self-examination, he would have been compelled to admit that it had, at one period, some foundation in truth, though, according to the present tone of his sentiments, it was difficult to believe that this had really been the case.

There already existed in his bosom two contradictory passions — a desire to revenge the death of his father, strangely qualified by admiration of his enemy's daughter. Against the former feeling he had struggled, until it seemed to him upon the wane;

against the latter he used no means of resistance, for he did not suspect its existence. That this was actually the case was chiefly evinced by his resuming his resolution to leave Scotland. Yet, though such was his purpose, he remained day after day at Wolf's Crag, without taking measures for carrying it into execution. It is true, that he had written to one or two kinsmen who resided in a distant quarter of Scotland, and particularly to the Marquis of A——, intimating his purpose; and when pressed upon the subject by Bucklaw, he was wont to allege the necessity of waiting for their reply, especially that of the Marquis, before taking so decisive a measure.

The Marquis was rich and powerful; and although he was suspected to entertain sentiments unfavourable to the government established at the Revolution, he had nevertheless address enough to head a party in the Scottish privy council, connected with the High Church faction in England, and powerful enough to menace those to whom the Lord Keeper adhered with a probable subversion of their power. The consulting with a personage of such importance was a plausible excuse, which Ravenswood used to Bucklaw, and probably to himself, for continuing his residence at Wolf's Crag; and it was rendered yet more so by a general report which began to be current of a probable change of ministers and measures in the Scottish administration. These rumours, strongly asserted by some, and as resolutely denied by others, as their wishes or interest dictated, found their way even to the ruinous Tower of Wolf's Crag, chiefly through the medium of Caleb, the butler, who, among his other excellences, was an ardent politician, and seldom made an excursion from the old fortress to the neighbouring village of Wolf's Hope without bringing back what tidings were current in the vicinity.

But if Bucklaw could not offer any satisfactory objections to the delay of the Master in leaving Scotland, he did not the less suffer with impatience the state of inaction to which it confined him; and it was only the ascendency which his new companion had acquired over him that induced him to submit to a course of life so alien to his habits and inclinations.

'You were wont to be thought a stirring active young fellow, Master,' was his frequent remonstrance; 'yet here you seem determined to live on and on like a rat in a hole, with this trifling difference, that the wiser vermin chooses a hermitage where he can find food at least; but as for us, Caleb's excuses become longer as his diet turns more spare, and I fear we shall

realise the stories they tell of the sloth: we have almost eat up the last green leaf on the plant, and have nothing left for it but to drop from the tree and break our necks.'

'Do not fear it,' said Ravenswood; 'there is a fate watches for us, and we too have a stake in the revolution that is now impending, and which already has alarmed many a bosom.'

'What fate — what revolution?' inquired his companion. 'We have had one revolution too much already, I think.'

Ravenswood interrupted him by putting into his hands a letter.

'O,' answered Bucklaw, 'my dream 's out. I thought I heard Caleb this morning pressing some unfortunate fellow to a drink of cold water, and assuring him it was better for his stomach in the morning than ale or brandy.'

'It was my Lord of A——'s courier,' said Ravenswood, 'who was doomed to experience his ostentatious hospitality, which I believe ended in sour beer and herrings. Read, and you will see the news he has brought us.'

'I will as fast as I can,' said Bucklaw; 'but I am no great clerk, nor does his lordship seem to be the first of scribes.'

The reader will peruse, in a few seconds, by the aid of our friend Ballantyne's[1] types, what took Bucklaw a good half hour in perusal, though assisted by the Master of Ravenswood. The tenor was as follows: —

'Right Honourable our Cousin,

'Our hearty commendations premised, these come to assure you of the interest which we take in your welfare, and in your purposes towards its augmentation. If we have been less active in showing forth our effective good-will towards you than, as a loving kinsman and blood-relative, we would willingly have desired, we request that you will impute it to lack of opportunity to show our good-liking, not to any coldness of our will. Touching your resolution to travel in foreign parts, as at this time we hold the same little advisable, in respect that your ill-willers may, according to the custom of such persons, impute motives for your journey, whereof, although we know and believe you to be as clear as ourselves, yet natheless their words may find credence in places where the belief in them may much prejudice you, and which we should see with more unwillingness and displeasure than with means of remedy.

'Having thus, as becometh our kindred, given you our poor

[1] See The Ballantynes. Note 3.

mind on the subject of your journeying forth of Scotland, we would willingly add reasons of weight, which might materially advantage you and your father's house, thereby to determine you to abide at Wolf's Crag, until this harvest season shall be passed over. But what sayeth the proverb, *verbum sapienti* — a word is more to him that hath wisdom than a sermon to a fool. And albeit we have written this poor scroll with our own hand, and are well assured of the fidelity of our messenger, as him that is many ways bounden to us, yet so it is, that slidd'ery ways crave wary walking, and that we may not peril upon paper matters which we would gladly impart to you by word of mouth. Wherefore, it was our purpose to have prayed you heartily to come to this barren Highland country to kill a stag, and to treat of the matters which we are now more painfully inditing to you anent. But commodity does not serve at present for such our meeting, which, therefore, shall be deferred until sic time as we may in all mirth rehearse those things whereof we now keep silence. Meantime, we pray you to think that we are, and will still be, your good kinsman and well-wisher, waiting but for times of whilk we do, as it were, entertain a twilight prospect, and appear and hope to be also your effectual well-doer. And in which hope we heartily write ourself,

'Right Honourable,

'Your loving cousin,

'A——.

'Given from our poor house of B——,' etc.

Superscribed — 'For the right honourable, and our honoured kinsman, the Master of Ravenswood — These, with haste, haste, post haste — ride and run until these be delivered.'

'What think you of this epistle, Bucklaw?' said the Master, when his companion had hammered out all the sense, and almost all the words of which it consisted.

'Truly, that the Marquis's meaning is as great a riddle as his manuscript. He is really in much need of *Wit's Interpreter*, or the *Complete Letter-Writer*, and were I you, I would send him a copy by the bearer. He writes you very kindly to remain wasting your time and your money in this vile, stupid, oppressed country, without so much as offering you the countenance and shelter of his house. In my opinion, he has some scheme in view in which he supposes you can be useful, and he

wishes to keep you at hand, to make use of you when it ripens, reserving the power of turning you adrift, should his plot fail in the concoction.'

'His plot! Then you suppose it is a treasonable business,' answered Ravenswood.

'What else can it be?' replied Bucklaw; 'the Marquis has been long suspected to have an eye to Saint Germains.'

'He should not engage me rashly in such an adventure,' said Ravenswood; 'when I recollect the times of the first and second Charles, and of the last James, truly I see little reason that, as a man or a patriot, I should draw my sword for their descendants.'

'Humph!' replied Bucklaw; 'so you have set yourself down to mourn over the crop-eared dogs whom honest Claver'se treated as they deserved?'

'They first gave the dogs an ill name, and then hanged them,' replied Ravenswood. 'I hope to see the day when justice shall be open to Whig and Tory, and when these nicknames shall only be used among coffee-house politicians, as "slut" and "jade" are among apple-women, as cant terms of idle spite and rancour.'

'That will not be in our days, Master: the iron has entered too deeply into our sides and our souls.'

'It will be, however, one day,' replied the Master; 'men will not always start at these nicknames as at a trumpet-sound. As social life is better protected, its comforts will become too dear to be hazarded without some better reason than speculative politics.'

'It is fine talking,' answered Bucklaw; 'but my heart is with the old song —

> To see good corn upon the rigs,
> And a gallows built to hang the Whigs,
> And the right restored where the right should be,
> O, that is the thing that would wanton me.'

'You may sing as loudly as you will, *cantabit vacuus* ——,' answered the Master; 'but I believe the Marquis is too wise, at least too wary, to join you in such a burden. I suspect he alludes to a revolution in the Scottish privy council, rather than in the British kingdoms.'

'O, confusion to your state tricks!' exclaimed Bucklaw — 'your cold calculating manœuvres, which old gentlemen in wrought nightcaps and furred gowns execute like so many games at chess, and displace a treasurer or lord commissioner

as they would take a rook or a pawn. Tennis for my sport, and battle for my earnest! My racket and my sword for my plaything and bread-winner! And you, Master, so deep and considerate as you would seem, you have that within you makes the blood boil faster than suits your present humour of moralising on political truths. You are one of those wise men who see everything with great composure till their blood is up, and then — woe to any one who should put them in mind of their own prudential maxims!'

'Perhaps,' said Ravenswood, 'you read me more rightly than I can myself. But to think justly will certainly go some length in helping me to act so. But hark! I hear Caleb tolling the dinner-bell.'

'Which he always does with the more sonorous grace in proportion to the meagreness of the cheer which he has provided,' said Bucklaw; 'as if that infernal clang and jangle, which will one day bring the belfry down the cliff, could convert a starved hen into a fat capon, and a blade-bone of mutton into a haunch of venison.'

'I wish we may be so well off as your worst conjectures surmise, Bucklaw, from the extreme solemnity and ceremony with which Caleb seems to place on the table that solitary covered dish.'

'Uncover, Caleb! uncover, for Heaven's sake!' said Bucklaw; 'let us have what you can give us without preface. Why, it stands well enough, man,' he continued, addressing impatiently the ancient butler, who, without reply, kept shifting the dish, until he at length placed it with mathematical precision in the very midst of the table.

'What have we got here, Caleb?' inquired the Master in his turn.

'Ahem! sir, ye suld have known before: but his honour the Laird of Bucklaw is so impatient,' answered Caleb, still holding the dish with one hand and the cover with the other, with evident reluctance to disclose the contents.

'But what is it, a God's name — not a pair of clean spurs, I hope, in the Border fashion of old times?'

'Ahem! ahem!' reiterated Caleb, 'your honour is pleased to be facetious; natheless, I might presume to say it was a convenient fashion, and used, as I have heard, in an honourable and thriving family. But touching your present dinner, I judged that this being St. Magdalen's Eve, who was a worthy queen of Scotland in her day, your honours might judge

it decorous, if not altogether to fast, yet only to sustain nature with some slight refection, as ane saulted herring or the like.' And, uncovering the dish, he displayed four of the savoury fishes which he mentioned, adding, in a subdued tone, 'that they were no just common herring neither, being every ane melters, and sauted with uncommon care by the housekeeper (poor Mysie) for his honour's especial use.'

'Out upon all apologies!' said the Master, 'let us eat the herrings, since there is nothing better to be had; but I begin to think with you, Bucklaw, that we are consuming the last green leaf, and that, in spite of the Marquis's political machinations, we must positively shift camp for want of forage, without waiting the issue of them.'

CHAPTER IX

Ay, and when huntsmen wind the merry horn,
And from its covert starts the fearful prey,
Who, warm'd with youth's blood in his swelling veins,
Would, like a lifeless clod, outstretched lie,
Shut out from all the fair creation offers!

Ethwald, Act I. Scene I

LIGHT meals procure light slumbers; and therefore it is not surprising that, considering the fare which Caleb's conscience, or his necessity, assuming, as will sometimes happen, that disguise, had assigned to the guests of Wolf's Crag, their slumbers should have been short.

In the morning Bucklaw rushed into his host's apartment with a loud halloo, which might have awaked the dead.

'Up! up! in the name of Heaven! The hunters are out, the only piece of sport I have seen this month; and you lie here, Master, on a bed that has little to recommend it, except that it may be something softer than the stone floor of your ancestor's vault.'

'I wish,' said Ravenswood, raising his head peevishly, 'you had forborne so early a jest, Mr. Hayston; it is really no pleasure to lose the very short repose which I had just begun to enjoy, after a night spent in thoughts upon fortune far harder than my couch, Bucklaw.'

'Pshaw, pshaw!' replied his guest; 'get up — get up; the hounds are abroad. I have saddled the horses myself, for old Caleb was calling for grooms and lackeys, and would never have proceeded without two hours' apology for the absence of men that were a hundred miles off. Get up, Master; I say the hounds are out — get up, I say; the hunt is up.' And off ran Bucklaw.

'And I say,' said the Master, rising slowly, 'that nothing can concern me less. Whose hounds come so near to us?'

'The Honourable Lord Bittlebrains',' answered Caleb, who

had followed the impatient Laird of Bucklaw into his master's bedroom, 'and truly I ken nae title they have to be yowling and howling within the freedoms and immunities of your lordship's right of free forestry.'

'Nor I, Caleb,' replied Ravenswood, 'excepting that they have bought both the lands and the right of forestry, and may think themselves entitled to exercise the rights they have paid their money for.'

'It may be sae, my lord,' replied Caleb; 'but it 's no gentleman's deed of them to come here and exercise such-like right, and your lordship living at your ain castle of Wolf's Crag. Lord Bittlebrains would do weel to remember what his folk have been.'

'And we what we now are,' said the Master, with suppressed bitterness of feeling. 'But reach me my cloak, Caleb, and I will indulge Bucklaw with a sight of this chase. It is selfish to sacrifice my guest's pleasure to my own.'

'Sacrifice!' echoed Caleb, in a tone which seemed to imply the total absurdity of his master making the least concession in deference to any one - - 'sacrifice, indeed! but I crave your honour's pardon, and whilk doublet is it your pleasure to wear?'

'Any one you will, Caleb; my wardrobe, I suppose, is not very extensive.'

'Not extensive!' echoed his assistant; 'when there is the grey and silver that your lordship bestowed on Hew Hildebrand, your outrider; and the French velvet that went with my lord your father - be gracious to him! - my lord your father's auld wardrobe to the puir friends of the family; and the *drap-de-Berry* ——'

'Which I gave to you, Caleb, and which, I suppose, is the only dress we have any chance to come at, except that I wore yesterday; pray, hand me that, and say no more about it.'

'If your honour has a fancy,' replied Caleb, 'and doubtless it 's a sad-coloured suit, and you are in mourning; nevertheless, I have never tried on the *drap-de-Berry* — ill wad it became me — and your honour having no change of claiths at this present — and it 's weel brushed, and as there are leddies down yonder ——

'Ladies!' said Ravenswood: 'and what ladies, pray?'

'What do I ken, your lordship? Looking down at them from the Warden's Tower, I could but see them glent by wi' their bridles ringing and their feathers fluttering, like the court of Elfland.'

'Well, well, Caleb,' replied the Master, 'help me on with my cloak, and hand me my sword-belt. What clatter is that in the courtyard?'

'Just Bucklaw bringing out the horses,' said Caleb, after a glance through the window, 'as if there werena men eneugh in the castle, or as if I couldna serve the turn o' ony o' them that are out o' the gate.'

'Alas! Caleb, we should want little if your ability were equal to your will,' replied his master.

'And I hope your lordship disna want that muckle,' said Caleb; 'for, considering a' things, I trust we support the credit of the family as weel as things will permit of, — only Bucklaw is aye sae frank and sae forward. And there he has brought out your lordship's palfrey, without the saddle being decored wi' the broidered sumpter-cloth! and I could have brushed it in a minute.'

'It is all very well,' said his master, escaping from him and descending the narrow and steep winding staircase which led to the courtyard.

'It *may* be a' very weel,' said Caleb, somewhat peevishly; 'but if your lordship wad tarry a bit, I will tell you what will *not* be very weel.'

'And what is that?' said Ravenswood, impatiently, but stopping at the same time.

'Why, just that ye suld speer ony gentleman hame to dinner; for I canna mak anither fast on a feast day, as when I cam ower Bucklaw wi' Queen Margaret; and, to speak truth, if your lordship wad but please to cast yoursell in the way of dining wi' Lord Bittlebrains, I'se warrand I wad cast about brawly for the morn: or if, stead o' that, ye wad but dine wi' them at the change-house, ye might mak your shift for the lawing: ye might say ye had forgot your purse, or that the carline awed ye rent, and that ye wad allow it in the settlement.'

'Or any other lie that came uppermost, I suppose?' said his master. 'Good-bye, Caleb; I commend your care for the honour of the family.' And, throwing himself on his horse, he followed Bucklaw, who, at the manifest risk of his neck, had begun to gallop down the steep path which led from the Tower as soon as he saw Ravenswood have his foot in the stirrup.

Caleb Balderstone looked anxiously after them, and shook his thin grey locks — 'And I trust they will come to no evil;

but they have reached the plain, and folk cannot say but that the horse are hearty and in spirits.'

Animated by the natural impetuosity and fire of his temper, young Bucklaw rushed on with the careless speed of a whirlwind. Ravenswood was scarce more moderate in his pace, for his was a mind unwillingly roused from contemplative inactivity, but which, when once put into motion, acquired a spirit of forcible and violent progression. Neither was his eagerness proportioned in all cases to the motive of impulse, but might be compared to the speed of a stone, which rushes with like fury down the hill whether it was first put in motion by the arm of a giant or the hand of a boy. He felt, therefore, in no ordinary degree, the headlong impulse of the chase, a pastime so natural to youth of all ranks, that it seems rather to be an inherent passion in our animal nature, which levels all differences of rank and education, than an acquired habit of rapid exercise.

The repeated bursts of the French horn, which was then always used for the encouragement and direction of the hounds; the deep, though distant baying of the pack; the half-heard cries of the huntsmen; the half-seen forms which were discovered, now emerging from glens which crossed the moor, now sweeping over its surface, now picking their way where it was impeded by morasses; and, above all, the feeling of his own rapid motion, animated the Master of Ravenswood, at least for the moment, above the recollections of a more painful nature by which he was surrounded. The first thing which recalled him to those unpleasing circumstances was feeling that his horse, notwithstanding all the advantages which he received from his rider's knowledge of the country, was unable to keep up with the chase. As he drew his bridle up with the bitter feeling that his poverty excluded him from the favourite recreation of his forefathers, and indeed their sole employment when not engaged in military pursuits, he was accosted by a well mounted stranger, who, unobserved, had kept near him during the earlier part of his career.

'Your horse is blown,' said the man, with a complaisance seldom used in a hunting-field. 'Might I crave your honour to make use of mine?'

'Sir,' said Ravenswood, more surprised than pleased at such a proposal, 'I really do not know how I have merited such a favour at a stranger's hands.'

'Never ask a question about it, Master,' said Bucklaw, who,

with great unwillingness, had hitherto reined in his own gallant steed, not to outride his host and entertainer. 'Take the goods the gods provide you, as the great John Dryden says; or stay —here, my friend, lend me that horse; I see you have been puzzled to rein him up this half-hour. I'll take the devil out of him for you. Now, Master, do you ride mine, which will carry you like an eagle.'

And throwing the rein of his own horse to the Master of Ravenswood, he sprung upon that which the stranger resigned to him, and continued his career at full speed.

'Was ever so thoughtless a being!' said the Master; 'and you, my friend, how could you trust him with your horse?'

'The horse,' said the man, 'belongs to a person who will make your honour, or any of your honourable friends, most welcome to him, flesh and fell.'

'And the owner's name is ——?' asked Ravenswood.

'Your honour must excuse me, you will learn that from himself. If you please to take your friend's horse, and leave me your galloway, I will meet you after the fall of the stag, for I hear they are blowing him at bay.'

'I believe, my friend, it will be the best way to recover your good horse for you,' answered Ravenswood; and mounting the nag of his friend Bucklaw, he made all the haste in his power to the spot where the blast of the horn announced that the stag's career was nearly terminated.

These jovial sounds were intermixed with the huntsmen's shouts of 'Hyke a Talbot! Hyke a Teviot! now, boys, now!' and similar cheering halloos of the olden hunting-field, to which the impatient yelling of the hounds, now close on the object of their pursuit, gave a lively and unremitting chorus. The straggling riders began now to rally towards the scene of action, collecting from different points as to a common centre.

Bucklaw kept the start which he had gotten, and arrived first at the spot, where the stag, incapable of sustaining a more prolonged flight, had turned upon the hounds, and, in the hunter's phrase, was at bay. With his stately head bent down, his sides white with foam, his eyes strained betwixt rage and terror, the hunted animal had now in his turn become an object of intimidation to his pursuers. The hunters came up one by one, and watched an opportunity to assail him with some advantage, which, in such circumstances, can only be done with caution. The dogs stood aloof and bayed loudly, intimating at once eagerness and fear, and each of the sports-

men seemed to expect hat his comrade would take upon him the perilous task of assaulting and disabling the animal. The ground, which was a hollow in the common or moor, afforded little advantage for approaching the stag unobserved; and general was the shout of triumph when Bucklaw, with the dexterity proper to an accomplished cavalier of the day, sprang from his horse, and dashing suddenly and swiftly at the stag, brought him to the ground by a cut on the hind leg with his short hunting-sword. The pack, rushing in upon their disabled enemy, soon ended his painful struggles, and solemnised his fall with their clamour; the hunters, with their horns and voices, whooping and blowing a *mort*, or death-note, which resounded far over the billows of the adjacent ocean.

The huntsman then withdrew the hounds from the throttled stag, and on his knee presented his knife to a fair female form, on a white palfrey, whose terror, or perhaps her compassion, had till then kept her at some distance. She wore a black silk riding-mask, which was then a common fashion, as well for preserving the complexion from sun and rain, as from an idea of decorum, which did not permit a lady to appear barefaced while engaged in a boisterous sport, and attended by a promiscuous company. The richness of her dress, however, as well as the mettle and form of her palfrey, together with the silvan compliment paid to her by the huntsman, pointed her out to Bucklaw as the principal person in the field. It was not without a feeling of pity, approaching even to contempt, that this enthusiastic hunter observed her refuse the huntsman's knife, presented to her for the purpose of making the first incision in the stag's breast, and thereby discovering the quality of the venison. He felt more than half inclined to pay his compliments to her; but it had been Bucklaw's misfortune, that his habits of life had not rendered him familiarly acquainted with the higher and better classes of female society, so that, with all his natural audacity, he felt sheepish and bashful when it became necessary to address a lady of distinction.

Taking unto himself heart of grace (to use his own phrase), he did at length summon up resolution enough to give the fare huntress good time of the day, and trust that her sport had answered her expectation. Her answer was very courteously and modestly expressed, and testified some gratitude to the gallant cavalier, whose exploit had terminated the chase so adroitly, when the hounds and huntsmen seemed somewhat at a stand.

'Uds daggers and scabbard, madam,' said Bucklaw, whom this observation brought at once upon his own ground, 'there is no difficulty or merit in that matter at all, so that a fellow is not too much afraid of having a pair of antlers in his guts I have hunted at force five hundred times, madam; and I never yet saw the stag at bay, by land or water, but I durst have gone roundly in on him. It is all use and wont, madam; and I 'll tell you, madam, for all that, it must be done with good heed and caution; and you will do well, madam, to have your hunting-sword both right sharp and double-edged, that you may strike either fore-handed or back-handed, as you see reason, for a hurt with a buck's horn is a perilous and somewhat venomous matter.'

'I am afraid, sir,' said the young lady, and her smile was scarce concealed by her vizard, 'I shall have little use for such careful preparation.'

'But the gentleman says very right for all that, my lady,' said an old huntsman, who had listened to Bucklaw's harangue with no small edification; 'and I have heard my father say, who was a forester at the Cabrach, that a wild boar's gaunch is more easily healed than a hurt from the deer's horn, for so says the old woodman's rhyme —

> If thou be hurt with horn of hart, it brings thee to thy bier;
> But tusk of boar shall leeches heal, thereof have lesser fear.'

'An I might advise,' continued Bucklaw, who was now in his element, and desirous of assuming the whole management, 'as the hounds are surbated and weary, the head of the stag should be cabbaged in order to reward them; and if I may presume to speak, the huntsman, who is to break up the stag, ought to drink to your good ladyship's health a good lusty bicker of ale, or a tass of brandy; for if he breaks him up without drinking, the venison will not keep well.'

This very agreeable prescription received, as will be readily believed, all acceptation from the huntsman, who, in requital, offered to Bucklaw the compliment of his knife, which the young lady had declined.

This polite proffer was seconded by his mistress. 'I believe, sir,' she said, withdrawing herself from the circle, 'that my father, for whose amusement Lord Bittlebrains' hounds have been out to-day, will readily surrender all care of these matters to a gentleman of your experience.'

Then, bending gracefully from her horse, she wished him

good morning, and, attended by one or two domestics, who seemed immediately attached to her service, retired from the scene of action, to which Bucklaw, too much delighted with an opportunity of displaying his woodcraft to care about man or woman either, paid little attention; but was soon stript to his doublet, with tucked-up sleeves, and naked arms up to the elbows in blood and grease, slashing, cutting, hacking, and hewing, with the precision of Sir Tristrem himself, and wrangling and disputing with all around him concerning nombles, briskets, flankards, and raven-bones, then usual terms of the art of hunting, or of butchery, whichever the reader chooses to call it, which are now probably antiquated.

When Ravenswood, who followed a short space behind his friend, saw that the stag had fallen, his temporary ardour for the chase gave way to that feeling of reluctance which he endured at encountering in his fallen fortunes the gaze whether of equals or inferiors. He reined up his horse on the top of a gentle eminence, from which he observed the busy and gay scene beneath him, and heard the whoops of the huntsmen, gaily mingled with the cry of the dogs, and the neighing and trampling of the horses. But these jovial sounds fell sadly on the ear of the ruined nobleman. The chase, with all its train of excitations, has ever since feudal times been accounted the almost exclusive privilege of the aristocracy, and was anciently their chief employment in times of peace. The sense that he was excluded by his situation from enjoying the silvan sport, which his rank assigned to him as a special prerogative, and the feeling that new men were now exercising it over the downs which had been jealously reserved by his ancestors for their own amusement, while he, the heir of the domain, was fain to hold himself at a distance from their party, awakened reflections calculated to depress deeply a mind like Ravenswood's, which was naturally contemplative and melancholy. His pride, however, soon shook off this feeling of dejection, and it gave way to impatience upon finding that his volatile friend Bucklaw seemed in no hurry to return with his borrowed steed, which Ravenswood, before leaving the field, wished to see restored to the obliging owner. As he was about to move towards the group of assembled huntsmen, he was joined by a horseman, who, like himself, had kept aloof during the fall of the deer.

This personage seemed stricken in years. He wore a scarlet cloak, buttoning high upon his face, and his hat was unlooped and slouched, probably by way of defence against the weather.

His horse, a strong and steady palfrey, was calculated for a rider who proposed to witness the sport of the day rather than to share it. An attendant waited at some distance, and the whole equipment was that of an elderly gentleman of rank and fashion. He accosted Ravenswood very politely, but not without some embarrassment.

'You seem a gallant young gentleman, sir,' he said, 'and yet appear as indifferent to this brave sport as if you had my load of years on your shoulders.'

'I have followed the sport with more spirit on other occasions,' replied the Master; 'at present, late events in my family must be my apology; and besides,' he added, 'I was but indifferently mounted at the beginning of the sport.'

'I think,' said the stranger, 'one of my attendants had the sense to accommodate your friend with a horse.'

'I was much indebted to his politeness and yours,' replied Ravenswood. 'My friend is Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, whom I daresay you will be sure to find in the thick of the keenest sportsmen. He will return your servant's horse, and take my pony in exchange; and will add,' he concluded, turning his horse's head from the stranger, 'his best acknowledgments to mine for the accommodation.'

The Master of Ravenswood, having thus expressed himself, began to move homeward, with the manner of one who has taken leave of his company. But the stranger was not so to be shaken off. He turned his horse at the same time, and rode in the same direction, so near to the Master that, without outriding him, which the formal civility of the time, and the respect due to the stranger's age and recent civility, would have rendered improper, he could not easily escape from his company.

The stranger did not long remain silent. 'This, then,' he said, 'is the ancient Castle of Wolf's Crag, often mentioned in the Scottish records,' looking to the old tower, then darkening under the influence of a stormy cloud, that formed its background; for at the distance of a short mile, the chase, having been circuitous, had brought the hunters nearly back to the point which they had attained when Ravenswood and Bucklaw had set forward to join them.

Ravenswood answered this observation with a cold and distant assent.

'It was, as I have heard,' continued the stranger, unabashed by his coldness, 'one of the most early possessions of the honourable family of Ravenswood.'

'Their earliest possession,' answered the Master, 'and probably their latest.'

'I — I — I should hope not, sir,' answered the stranger, clearing his voice with more than one cough, and making an effort to overcome a certain degree of hesitation; 'Scotland knows what she owes to this ancient family, and remembers their frequent and honourable achievements. I have little doubt that, were it properly represented to her Majesty that so ancient and noble a family were subjected to dilapidation — I mean to decay — means might be found, *ad re-ædificandum antiquam domum* ——'

'I will save you the trouble, sir, of discussing this point farther,' interrupted the Master, haughtily. 'I am the heir of that unfortunate house — I am the Master of Ravenswood. And you, sir, who seem to be a gentleman of fashion and education, must be sensible that the next mortification after being unhappy is the being loaded with undesired commiseration.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said the elder horseman; 'I did not know — I am sensible I ought not to have mentioned — nothing could be farther from my thoughts than to suppose ——'

'There are no apologies necessary, sir,' answered Ravenswood, 'for here, I suppose, our roads separate, and I assure you that we part in perfect equanimity on my side.'

As speaking these words, he directed his horse's head towards a narrow causeway, the ancient approach to Wolf's Crag, of which it might be truly said, in the words of the Bard of Hope, that

> Frequented by few was the grass-cover'd road,
> Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trode,
> To his hills that encircle the sea.

But ere he could disengage himself from his companion, the young lady we have already mentioned came up to join the stranger, followed by her servants.

'Daughter,' said the stranger to the masked damsel, 'this is the Master of Ravenswood.'

It would have been natural that the gentleman should have replied to this introduction; but there was something in the graceful form and retiring modesty of the female to whom he was thus presented, which not only prevented him from inquiring to whom, and by whom, the annunciation had been made, but which even for the time struck him absolutely mute. At this moment the cloud which had long lowered above the height

on which Wolf's Crag is situated, and which now, as it advanced, spread itself in darker and denser folds both over land and sea, hiding the distant objects and obscuring those which were nearer, turning the sea to a leaden complexion and the heath to a darker brown, began now, by one or two distant peals, to announce the thunders with which it was fraught; while two flashes of lightning, following each other very closely, showed in the distance the grey turrets of Wolf's Crag, and, more nearly, the rolling billows of the ocean, crested suddenly with red and dazzling light.

The horse of the fair huntress showed symptoms of impatience and restiveness, and it became impossible for Ravenswood, as a man or a gentleman, to leave her abruptly to the care of an aged father or her menial attendants. He was, or believed himself, obliged in courtesy to take hold of her bridle, and assist her in managing the unruly animal. While he was thus engaged, the old gentleman observed that the storm seemed to increase; that they were far from Lord Bittlebrains', whose guests they were for the present; and that he would be obliged to the Master of Ravenswood to point him the way to the nearest place of refuge from the storm. At the same time he cast a wistful and embarrassed look towards the Tower of Wolf's Crag, which seemed to render it almost impossible for the owner to avoid offering an old man and a lady, in such an emergency, the temporary use of his house. Indeed, the condition of the young huntress made this courtesy indispensable; for, in the course of the services which he rendered, he could not but perceive that she trembled much, and was extremely agitated, from her apprehensions, doubtless, of the coming storm.

I know not if the Master of Ravenswood shared her terrors but he was not entirely free from something like a similar disorder of nerves, as he observed, 'The Tower of Wolf's Crag has nothing to offer beyond the shelter of its roof, but if that can be acceptable at such a moment ——' he paused, as if the rest of the invitation stuck in his throat. But the old gentleman, his self-constituted companion, did not allow him to recede from the invitation, which he had rather suffered to be implied than directly expressed.

'The storm,' said the stranger, 'must be an apology for waiving ceremony; his daughter's health was weak, she had suffered much from a recent alarm; he trusted their intrusion on the Master of Ravenswood's hospitality would not be alto-

gether unpardonable in the circumstances of the case: his child's safety must be dearer to him than ceremony.'

There was no room to retreat. The Master of Ravenswood led the way, continuing to keep hold of the lady's bridle to prevent her horse from starting at some unexpected explosion of thunder. He was not so bewildered in his own hurried reflections but that he remarked, that the deadly paleness which had occupied her neck and temples, and such of her features as the riding mask left exposed, gave place to a deep and rosy suffusion; and he felt with embarrassment that a flush was by tacit sympathy excited in his own cheeks. The stranger, with watchfulness which he disguised under apprehensions for the safety of his daughter, continued to observe the expression of the Master's countenance as they ascended the hill to Wolf's Crag. When they stood in front of that ancient fortress, Ravenswood's emotions were of a very complicated description; and as he led the way into the rude courtyard, and hallooed to Caleb to give attendance, there was a tone of sternness, almost of fierceness, which seemed somewhat alien from the courtesies of one who is receiving honoured guests.

Caleb came; and not the paleness of the fair stranger at the first approach of the thunder, nor the paleness of any other person, in any other circumstances whatever, equalled that which overcame the thin cheeks of the disconsolate seneschal when he beheld this accession of guests to the castle, and reflected that the dinner hour was fast approaching. 'Is he daft?' he muttered to himself — 'is he clean daft a'thegither, to bring lords and leddies, and a host of folk behint them, and twal o'clock chappit?' Then approaching the Master, he craved pardon for having permitted the rest of his people to go out to see the hunt, observing, that 'They wad never think of his lordship coming back till mirk night, and that he dreaded they might play the truant.'

'Silence, Balderstone!' said Ravenswood, sternly; 'your folly is unseasonable. Sir and madam,' he said, turning to his guests, 'this old man, and a yet older and more imbecile female domestic, form my whole retinue. Our means of refreshing you are more scanty than even so miserable a retinue, and a dwelling so dilapidated, might seem to promise you; but, such as they may chance to be, you may command them.'

The elder stranger, struck with the ruined and even savage appearance of the Tower, rendered still more disconsolate by the lowering and gloomy sky, and perhaps not altogether un-

moved by the grave and determined voice in which their host addressed them, looked round him anxiously, as if he half repented the readiness with which he had accepted the offered hospitality. But there was now no opportunity of receding from the situation in which he had placed himself.

As for Caleb, he was so utterly stunned by his master's public and unqualified acknowledgment of the nakedness of the land, that for two minutes he could only mutter within his hebdomadal beard, which had not felt the razor for six days, 'He 's daft — clean daft — red wud, and awa' wi't! But deil hae Caleb Balderstone,' said he, collecting his powers of invention and resource, 'if the family shall lose credit, if he were as mad as the seven wise masters!' He then boldly advanced, and in spite of his master's frowns and impatience, gravely asked, 'If he should not serve up some slight refection for the young leddy, and a glass of tokay, or old sack — or ——'

'Truce to this ill-timed foolery,' said the Master, sternly; 'put the horses into the stable, and interrupt us no more with your absurdities.'

'Your honour's pleasure is to be obeyed aboon a' things,' said Caleb; 'nevertheless, as for the sack and tokay which it is not your noble guests' pleasure to accept ——'

But here the voice of Bucklaw, heard even above the clattering of hoofs and braying of horns with which it mingled, announced that he was scaling the pathway to the Tower at the head of the greater part of the gallant hunting train.

'The deil be in me,' said Caleb, taking heart in spite of this new invasion of Philistines, 'if they shall beat me yet! The hellicat ne'er-do-weel! to bring such a crew here, that will expect to find brandy as plenty as ditch-water, and he kenning sae absolutely the case in whilk we stand for the present! But I trow, could I get rid of thae gaping gowks of flunkies that hae won into the courtyard at the back of their betters, as mony a man gets preferment, I could make a right yet.'

The measures which he took to execute his dauntless resolution, the reader shall learn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X

With throat unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard him call;
Gramercy they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they had been drinking all!

COLERIDGE's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

HAYSTON of Bucklaw was one of the thoughtless class who never hesitate between their friend and their jest. When it was announced that the principal persons of the chase had taken their route towards Wolf's Crag, the huntsmen, as a point of civility, offered to transfer the venison to that mansion; a proffer which was readily accepted by Bucklaw, who thought much of the astonishment which their arrival in full body would occasion poor old Caleb Balderstone, and very little of the dilemma to which he was about to expose his friend the Master, so ill circumstanced to receive such a party. But in old Caleb he had to do with a crafty and alert antagonist, prompt at supplying, upon all emergencies, evasions and excuses suitable, as he thought, to the dignity of the family.

'Praise be blest!' said Caleb to himself, 'ae leaf of the muckle gate has been swung to wi' yestreen's wind, and I think I can manage to shut the ither.'

But he was desirous, like a prudent governor, at the same time to get rid, if possible, of the internal enemy, in which light he considered almost every one who eat and drank, ere he took measures to exclude those whom their jocund noise now pronounced to be near at hand. He waited, therefore, with impatience until his master had shown his two principal guests into the Tower, and then commenced his operations.

'I think,' he said to the stranger menials, 'that, as they are bringing the stag's head to the castle in all honour, we, who are indwellers, should receive them at the gate.'

The unwary grooms had no sooner hurried out, in com-

pliance with this insidious hint, than, one folding-door of the ancient gate being already closed by the wind, as has been already intimated, honest Caleb lost no time in shutting the other with a clang, which resounded from donjon vault to battlement. Having thus secured the pass, he forthwith indulged the excluded huntsmen in brief parley, from a small projecting window, or shot-hole, through which, in former days, the warders were wont to reconnoitre those who presented themselves before the gates. He gave them to understand in a short and pithy speech, that the gate of the castle was never on any account opened during meal-times;[1] that his honour the Master of Ravenswood, and some guests of quality, had just sat down to dinner; that there was excellent brandy at the lieutenant's wife's at Wolf's Hope down below; and he held out some obscure hint that the reckoning would be discharged by the Master. But this communication was delivered in a very dubious and oracular strain, and, like Iago's in Act IV., Caleb Balderstone hesitated to carry *finesse* so far as direct falsehood, and was content to deceive, if possible, without directly lying.

This announcement was received with surprise by some, with laughter by others, and with dismay by the expelled lackeys, who endeavoured to demonstrate that their right of readmission, for the purpose of waiting upon their master and mistress, was at least indisputable. But Caleb was not in a humour to understand or admit any distinctions. He stuck to his original proposition with that dogged but convenient pertinacity which is armed against all conviction, and deaf to all reasoning. Bucklaw now came from the rear of the party, and demanded admittance in a very angry tone. But the resolution of Caleb was immovable.

'If the king on the throne were at the gate,' he declared, 'his ten fingers should never open it contrair to the established use and wont of the family of Ravenswood, and his duty as their head-servant.'

Bucklaw was now extremely incensed, and with more oaths and curses than we care to repeat, declared himself most unworthily treated, and demanded peremptorily to speak with the Master of Ravenswood himself.

But to this also Caleb turned a deaf ear. 'He's as fou as a-bleeze as a tap of tow, the lad Bucklaw,' he said: 'but the deil of ony master's face he shall see till he has sleepit and waken'd out. He'll ken himself better the morn's morning. It sets the like o' him, to be bringing a crew of drunken

[1] [See *Old Mortality*, Note 12, p. 416.]

hunters here, when he kens there is but little preparation to sloken his ain drought.' And he disappeared from the window, leaving them all to digest their exclusion as they best might.

But another person, of whose presence Caleb, in the animation of the debate, was not aware, had listened in silence to its progress. This was the principal domestic of the stranger — a man of trust and consequence — the same who, in the hunting-field, had accommodated Bucklaw with the use of his horse. He was in the stable when Caleb had contrived the expulsion of his fellow servants, and thus avoided sharing the same fate, from which his personal importance would certainly not have otherwise saved him.

This personage perceived the manœuvre of Caleb, easily appreciated the motive of his conduct, and knowing his master's intentions towards the family of Ravenswood, had no difficulty as to the line of conduct he ought to adopt. He took the place of Caleb (unperceived by the latter) at the post of audience which he had just left, and announced to the assembled domestics, 'That it was his master's pleasure that Lord Bittlebrains' retinue and his own should go down to the adjacent change house and call for what refreshments they might have occasion for, and he should take care to discharge the lawing.'

The jolly troop of huntsmen retired from the inhospitable gate of Wolf's Crag, execrating, as they descended the steep pathway, the niggard and unworthy disposition of the proprietor, and damning, with more than silvan license, both the castle and its inhabitants. Bucklaw, with many qualities which would have made him a man of worth and judgment in more favourable circumstances, had been so utterly neglected in point of education, that he was apt to think and feel according to the ideas of the companions of his pleasures. The praises which had recently been heaped upon himself he contrasted with the general abuse now levelled against Ravenswood: he recalled to his mind the dull and monotonous days he had spent in the Tower of Wolf's Crag, compared with the joviality of his usual life; he felt with great indignation his exclusion from the castle, which he considered as a gross affront and every mingled feeling led him to break off the union which he had formed with the Master of Ravenswood.

On arriving at the change-house of the village of Wolf Hope, he unexpectedly met with an old acquaintance just alighting from his horse. This was no other than the very respectable Captain Craigengelt, who immediately came up to

him, and, without appearing to retain any recollection of the indifferent terms on which they had parted, shook him by the hand in the warmest manner possible. A warm grasp of the hand was what Bucklaw could never help returning with cordiality, and no sooner had Craigengelt felt the pressure of his fingers than he knew the terms on which he stood with him.

'Long life to you, Bucklaw!' he exclaimed; 'there 's life for honest folk in this bad world yet!'

The Jacobites at this period, with what propriety I know not, used, it must be noticed, the term of *honest men* as peculiarly descriptive of their own party.

'Ay, and for others besides, it seems,' answered Bucklaw; 'otherways, how came you to venture hither, noble Captain?'

'Who — I? I am as free as the wind at Martinmas, that pays neither land-rent nor annual; all is explained — all settled with the honest old drivellers yonder of Auld Reekie. Pooh! pooh! they dared not keep me a week of days in durance. A certain person has better friends among them than you wot of, and can serve a friend when it is least likely.'

'Pshaw!' answered Hayston, who perfectly knew and thoroughly despised the character of this man, 'none of your cogging gibberish; tell me truly, are you at liberty and in safety?'

'Free and safe as a Whig bailie on the causeway of his own borough, or a canting Presbyterian minister in his own pulpit; and I came to tell you that you need not remain in hiding any longer.'

'Then I suppose you call yourself my friend, Captain Craigengelt?' said Bucklaw.

'Friend!' replied Craigengelt, 'my cock of the pit! why, I am thy very Achates, man, as I have heard scholars say — hand and glove — bark and tree — thine to life and death!'

'I 'll try that in a moment,' answered Bucklaw. 'Thou art never without money, however thou comest by it. Lend me two pieces to wash the dust out of these honest fellows' throats in the first place, and then ——'

'Two pieces! Twenty are at thy service, my lad, and twenty to back them.'

'Ay, say you so?' said Bucklaw, pausing, for his natural penetration led him to suspect some extraordinary motive lay couched under such an excess of generosity. 'Craigengelt, you are either an honest fellow in right good earnest, and I scarce

know how to believe that; or you are cleverer than I took you for, and I scarce know how to believe that either.'

'*L'un n'empêche pas l'autre*,' said Craigengelt. 'Touch and try; the gold is good as ever was weighed.'

He put a quantity of gold pieces into Bucklaw's hand, which he thrust into his pocket without either counting or looking at them, only observing, 'That he was so circumstanced that he must enlist, though the devil offered the press-money'; and then turning to the huntsmen, he called out, 'Come along, my lads; all is at my cost.'

'Long life to Bucklaw!' shouted the men of the chase.

'And confusion to him that takes his share of the sport, and leaves the hunters as dry as a drumhead,' added another, by way of corollary.

'The house of Ravenswood was ance a gude and an honourable house in this land,' said an old man; 'but it 's lost its credit this day, and the Master has shown himself no better than a greedy cullion.'

And with this conclusion, which was unanimously agreed to by all who heard it, they rushed tumultuously into the house of entertainment, where they revelled till a late hour. The jovial temper of Bucklaw seldom permitted him to be nice in the choice of his associates; and on the present occasion, when his joyous debauch received additional zest from the intervention of an unusual space of sobriety, and almost abstinence, he was as happy in leading the revels as if his comrades had been sons of princes. Craigengelt had his own purposes in fooling him up to the top of his bent; and having some low humour, much impudence, and the power of singing a good song, understanding besides thoroughly the disposition of his regained associate, he readily succeeded in involving him bumper-deep in the festivity of the meeting.

A very different scene was in the meantime passing in the Tower of Wolf's Crag. When the Master of Ravenswood left the courtyard, too much busied with his own perplexed reflections to pay attention to the manœuvre of Caleb, he ushered his guests into the great hall of the castle.

The indefatigable Balderstone, who, from choice or habit, worked on from morning to night, had by degrees cleared this desolate apartment of the confused relics of the funeral banquet, and restored it to some order. But not all his skill and labour, in disposing to advantage the little furniture which remained,

could remove the dark and disconsolate appearance of those ancient and disfurnished walls. The narrow windows, flanked by deep indentures into the wall, seemed formed rather to exclude than to admit the cheerful light; and the heavy and gloomy appearance of the thunder-sky added still farther to the obscurity.

As Ravenswood, with the grace of a gallant of that period, but not without a certain stiffness and embarrassment of manner, handed the young lady to the upper end of the apartment, her father remained standing more near to the door, as if about to disengage himself from his hat and cloak. At this moment the clang of the portal was heard, a sound at which the stranger started, stepped hastily to the window, and looked with an air of alarm at Ravenswood, when he saw that the gate of the court was shut, and his domestics excluded.

'You have nothing to fear, sir,' said Ravenswood, gravely; 'this roof retains the means of giving protection, though not welcome. Methinks,' he added, 'it is time that I should know who they are that have thus highly honoured my ruined dwelling!'

The young lady remained silent and motionless, and the father, to whom the question was more directly addressed, seemed in the situation of a performer who has ventured to take upon himself a part which he finds himself unable to present and who comes to a pause when it is most to be expected that he should speak. While he endeavoured to cover his embarrassment with the exterior ceremonials of a well-bred demeanour, it was obvious that, in making his bow, one foot shuffled forward, as if to advance, the other backward, as if with the purpose of escape; and as he undid the cape of his coat, and raised his beaver from his face, his fingers fumbled as if the one had been linked with rusted iron, or the other had weighed equal with a stone of lead. The darkness of the sky seemed to increase, as if to supply the want of those mufflings which he laid aside with such evident reluctance. The impatience of Ravenswood increased also in proportion to the delay of the stranger, and he appeared to struggle under agitation, though probably from a very different cause. He laboured to restrain his desire to speak while the stranger, to all appearance, was at a loss for words to express what he felt it necessary to say.

At length Ravenswood's impatience broke the bonds he had imposed upon it. 'I perceive,' he said, 'that Sir William Ashton is unwilling to announce himself in the Castle of Wolf's Crag.'

'I had hoped it was unnecessary,' said the Lord Keeper, relieved from his silence, as a spectre by the voice of the exorcist; 'and I am obliged to you, Master of Ravenswood, for breaking the ice at once, where circumstances — unhappy circumstances, let me call them — rendered self-introduction peculiarly awkward.'

'And I am not then,' said the Master of Ravenswood, gravely, 'to consider the honour of this visit as purely accidental?'

'Let us distinguish a little,' said the Keeper, assuming an appearance of ease which perhaps his heart was a stranger to; 'this is an honour which I have eagerly desired for some time, but which I might never have obtained, save for the accident of the storm. My daughter and I are alike grateful for this opportunity of thanking the brave man to whom she owes her life and I mine.'

The hatred which divided the great families in the feudal times had lost little of its bitterness, though it no longer expressed itself in deeds of open violence. Not the feelings which Ravenswood had begun to entertain towards Lucy Ashton, not the hospitality due to his guests, were able entirely to subdue, though they warmly combated, the deep passions which arose within him at beholding his father's foe standing in the hall of the family of which he had in a great measure accelerated the ruin. His looks glanced from the father to the daughter with an irresolution of which Sir William Ashton did not think it proper to await the conclusion. He had now disembarrassed himself of his riding-dress, and walking up to his daughter, he undid the fastening of her mask.

'Lucy, my love,' he said, raising her and leading her towards Ravenswood, 'lay aside your mask, and let us express our gratitude to the Master openly and barefaced.'

'If he will condescend to accept it,' was all that Lucy uttered; but in a tone so sweetly modulated, and which seemed to imply at once a feeling and a forgiving of the cold reception to which they were exposed, that, coming from a creature so innocent and so beautiful, her words cut Ravenswood to the very heart for his harshness. He muttered something of surprise, something of confusion, and, ending with a warm and eager expression of his happiness at being able to afford her shelter under his roof, he saluted her, as the ceremonial of the time enjoined upon such occasions. Their cheeks had touched and were withdrawn from each other; Ravenswood had not quitted the hand which he had taken in kindly courtesy; a

blush, which attached more consequence by far than was usual to such ceremony, still mantled on Lucy Ashton's beautiful cheek, when the apartment was suddenly illuminated by a flash of lightning, which seemed absolutely to swallow the darkness of the hall. Every object might have been for an instant seen distinctly. The slight and half-sinking form of Lucy Ashton; the well-proportioned and stately figure of Ravenswood, his dark features, and the fiery yet irresolute expression of his eyes; the old arms and scutcheons which hung on the walls of the apartment, were for an instant distinctly visible to the Keeper by a strong red brilliant glare of light. Its disappearance was almost instantly followed by a burst of thunder, for the storm-cloud was very near the castle; and the peal was so sudden and dreadful, that the old tower rocked to its foundation, and every inmate concluded it was falling upon them. The soot, which had not been disturbed for centuries, showered down the huge tunnelled chimneys; lime and dust flew in clouds from the wall; and, whether the lightning had actually struck the castle or whether through the violent concussion of the air, several heavy stones were hurled from the mouldering battlements into the roaring sea beneath. It might seem as if the ancient founder of the castle were bestriding the thunderstorm, and proclaiming his displeasure at the reconciliation of his descendant with the enemy of his house.

The consternation was general, and it required the efforts of both the Lord Keeper and Ravenswood to keep Lucy from fainting. Thus was the Master a second time engaged in the most delicate and dangerous of all tasks, that of affording support to a beautiful and helpless being, who, as seen before in a similar situation, had already become a favourite of his imagination, both when awake and when slumbering. If the genius of the house really condemned a union betwixt the Master and his fair guest, the means by which he expressed his sentiments were as unhappily chosen as if he had been a mere mortal. The train of little attentions, absolutely necessary to soothe the young lady's mind, and aid her in composing her spirits, necessarily threw the Master of Ravenswood into such an intercourse with her father as was calculated, for the moment at least, to break down the barrier of feudal enmity which divided them. To express himself churlishly, or even coldly, towards an old man whose daughter (and *such* a daughter) lay before them, overpowered with natural terror — and all this under his own roof — the thing

was impossible; and by the time that Lucy, extending a hand to each, was able to thank them for their kindness, the Master felt that his sentiments of hostility towards the Lord Keeper were by no means those most predominant in his bosom.

The weather, her state of health, the absence of her attendants, all prevented the possibility of Lucy Ashton renewing her journey to Bittlebrains House, which was full five miles distant; and the Master of Ravenswood could not but, in common courtesy, offer the shelter of his roof for the rest of the day and for the night. But a flush of less soft expression, a look much more habitual to his features, resumed predominance when he mentioned how meanly he was provided for the entertainment of his guests.

'Do not mention deficiencies,' said the Lord Keeper, eager to interrupt him and prevent his resuming an alarming topic; 'you are preparing to set out for the Continent, and your house is probably for the present unfurnished. All this we understand; but if you mention inconvenience, you will oblige us to seek accommodations in the hamlet.'

As the Master of Ravenswood was about to reply, the door of the hall opened, and Caleb Balderstone rushed in.

CHAPTER XI

Let them have meat enough, woman — half a hen;
There be old rotten pilchards — put them off too;
'T is but a little new anointing of them,
And a strong onion, that confounds the savour.

Love's Pilgrimage.

THE thunderbolt, which had stunned all who were within hearing of it, had only served to awaken the bold and inventive genius of the flower of majors-domo. Almost before the clatter had ceased, and while there was yet scarce an assurance whether the castle was standing or falling, Caleb exclaimed, 'Heavens be praised! this comes to hand like the bowl of a pint-stoup.' He then barred the kitchen door in the face of the Lord Keeper's servant, whom he perceived returning from the party at the gate, and muttering, 'How the deil cam he in? — but deil may care. Mysie, what are ye sitting shaking and greeting in the chimney-neuk for? Come here — or stay where ye are, and skirl as loud as ye can; it 's a' ye 're gude for. I say, ye auld deevil, skirl — skirl — louder — louder, woman; gar the gentles hear ye in the ha'. I have heard ye as far off as the Bass for a less matter. And stay - down wi' that crockery ——'

And with a sweeping blow, he threw down from a shelf some articles of pewter and earthenware. He exalted his voice amid the clatter, shouting and roaring in a manner which changed Mysie's hysterical terrors of the thunder into fears that her old fellow-servant was gone distracted. 'He has dung down a' the bits o' pigs, too — the only thing we had left to haud a soup milk — and he has spilt the hatted kit that was for the Master's dinner. Mercy save us, the auld man 's gaen clean and clear wud wi' the thunner!'

'Haud your tongue, ye b——!' said Caleb, in the impetuous and overbearing triumph of successful invention, 'a 's provided now — dinner and a'thing; the thunner 's done a' in a clap of a hand!'

WITH A SWEEPING BLOW HE THREW DOWN SOME PEWTER AND EARTHENWARE.
From a painting by Hay.

'Puir man, he 's muckle astray,' said Mysie, looking at him with a mixture of pity and alarm; 'I wish he may ever come hame to himsell again.'

'Here, ye auld doited deevil,' said Caleb, still exulting in his extrication from a dilemma which had seemed insurmountable; 'keep the strange man out of the kitchen; swear the thunner came down the chimney and spoiled the best dinner ye ever dressed — beef — bacon — kid — lark — leveret — wild-fowl — venison, and what not. Lay it on thick, and never mind expenses. I 'll awa' up to the ha'. Make a' the confusion ye can; but be sure ye keep out the strange servant.'

With these charges to his ally, Caleb posted up to the hall, but stopping to reconnoitre through an aperture, which time, for the convenience of many a domestic in succession, had made in the door, and perceiving the situation of Miss Ashton, he had prudence enough to make a pause, both to avoid adding to her alarm and in order to secure attention to his account of the disastrous effects of the thunder.

But when he perceived that the lady was recovered, and heard the conversation turn upon the accommodation and refreshment which the castle afforded, he thought it time to burst into the room in the manner announced in the last chapter.

'Wull a wins! Such a misfortune to befa' the house of Ravenswood, and I to live to see it.'

'What is the matter, Caleb?' said his master, somewhat alarmed in his turn; 'has any part of the castle fallen?'

'Castle fa'an! na, but the sute 's fa'an, and the thunner 's come right down the kitchen-lum, and the things are a' lying here awa', there awa', like the Laird o' Hotchpotch's lands; and wi' brave guests of honour and quality to entertain (a low bow here to Sir William Ashton and his daughter), and nae-thing left in the house fit to present for dinner, or for supper either, for aught that I can see!'

'I verily believe you, Caleb,' said Ravenswood, drily.

Balderstone here turned to his master a half-upbraiding, half-imploring countenance, and edged towards him as he repeated, 'It was nae great matter of preparation; but just something added to your honour's ordinary course of fare — *petty cover*, as they say at the Louvre — three courses and the fruit.'

'Keep your intolerable nonsense to yourself, you old fool!' said Ravenswood, mortified at his officiousness, yet not knowing

how to contradict him, without the risk of giving rise to scenes yet more ridiculous.

Caleb saw his advantage, and resolved to improve it. But first, observing that the Lord Keeper's servant entered the apartment and spoke apart with his master, he took the same opportunity to whisper a few words into Ravenswood's ear. 'Haud your tongue, for heaven's sake, sir; if it 's my pleasure to hazard my soul in telling lees for the honour of the family, it 's nae business o' yours; and if ye let me gang on quietly, I'se be moderate in my banquet; but if ye contradict me, deil but I dress ye a dinner fit for a duke!'

Ravenswood, in fact, thought it would be best to let his officious butler run on, who proceeded to enumerate upon his fingers — 'No muckle provision — might hae served four persons of honour, — first course, capons in white broth - roast kid bacon with reverence; second course, roasted leveret butter crabs — a veal florentine; third course, blackcock - it's black eneugh now wi' the suite plumdamas — a tart - a flam and some nonsense sweet things, and confits — and that 's a',' he said, seeing the impatience of his master — 'that 's just a' was o't — forbye the apples and pears.'

Miss Ashton had by degrees gathered her spirits, so far as to pay some attention to what was going on; and observing the restrained impatience of Ravenswood, contrasted with the peculiar determination of manner with which Caleb detailed his imaginary banquet, the whole struck her as so ridiculous that, despite every effort to the contrary, she burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter, in which she was joined by her father, though with more moderation, and finally by the Master of Ravenswood himself, though conscious that the jest was at his own expense. Their mirth — for a scene which we read with little emotion often appears extremely ludicrous to the spectators — made the old vault ring again. They ceased they renewed - they ceased - they renewed again their shouts of laughter! Caleb, in the meantime, stood his ground with a grave, angry, and scornful dignity, which greatly enhanced the ridicule of the scene and the mirth of the spectators.

At length, when the voices, and nearly the strength, of the laughers were exhausted, he exclaimed, with very little ceremony, 'The deil 's in the gentles! they breakfast sae lordly, that the loss of the best dinner ever cook pat fingers to makes them as merry as if it were the best jeest in a' George Buchanan.'[1]

[1] See George Buchanan's Jests. Note 4.

If there was as little in your honours' wames as there is in Caleb Balderstone's, less caickling wad serve ye on sic a gravaminous subject.'

Caleb's blunt expression of resentment again awakened the mirth of the company, which, by the way, he regarded not only as an aggression upon the dignity of the family, but a special contempt of the eloquence with which he himself had summed up the extent of their supposed losses. 'A description of a dinner,' as he said afterwards to Mysie, 'that wad hae made a fu' man hungry, and them to sit there laughing at it!'

'But,' said Miss Ashton, composing her countenance as well as she could, 'are all these delicacies so totally destroyed that no scrap can be collected?'

'Collected, my leddy! what wad ye collect out of the suite and the ass? Ye may gang down yoursell, and look into our kitchen — the cookmaid in the trembling exies — the gude vivers lying a' about — beef, capons, and white broth — florentine and flams — bacon wi' reverence — and a' the sweet confections and whim-whams — ye'll see them a', my leddy — that is,' said he, correcting himself, 'ye'll no see ony of them now, for the cook has scoopit them up, as was weel her part: but ye'll see the white broth where it was spilt. I pat my fingers in it, and it tastes as like sour milk as ony thing else; if that isna the effect of thunner, I kenna what is. This gentleman here couldna but hear the clash of our haill dishes, china and silver thegither?'

The Lord Keeper's domestic, though a statesman's attendant, and of course trained to command his countenance upon all occasions, was somewhat discomposed by this appeal, to which he only answered by a bow.

'I think, Mr. Butler,' said the Lord Keeper, who began to be afraid lest the prolongation of this scene should at length displease Ravenswood — 'I think that, were you to retire with my servant Lockhard — he has travelled, and is quite accustomed to accidents and contingencies of every kind, and I hope betwixt you, you may find out some mode of supply at this emergency.'

'His honour kens,' said Caleb, who, however hopeless of himself of accomplishing what was desirable, would, like the high-spirited elephant, rather have died in the effort than brooked the aid of a brother in commission — 'his honour kens weel I need nae counsellor, when the honour of the house is concerned.'

'I should be unjust if I denied it, Caleb,' said his master; 'but your art lies chiefly in making apologies, upon which we

can no more dine than upon the bill of fare of our thunder blasted dinner. Now, possibly Mr. Lockhard's talent may consist in finding some substitute for that which certainly is not and has in all probability never been.'

'Your honour is pleased to be facetious,' said Caleb, 'but I am sure that, for the warst, for a walk as far as Wolf's Hope, I could dine forty men — no that the folk there deserve your honour's custom. They hae been ill advised in the matter of the duty eggs and butter, I winna deny that.'

'Do go consult together,' said the Master; 'go down to the village, and do the best you can. We must not let our guest remain without refreshment, to save the honour of a ruined family. And here, Caleb, take my purse; I believe that will prove your best ally.'

'Purse! purse, indeed!' quoth Caleb, indignantly flinging out of the room; 'what suld I do wi' your honour's purse, on your ain grund? I trust we are no to pay for our ain?'

The servants left the hall; and the door was no sooner shut than the Lord Keeper began to apologise for the rudeness of his mirth; and Lucy to hope she had given no pain or offence to the kind hearted faithful old man.

'Caleb and I must both learn, madam, to undergo with good humour, or at least with patience, the ridicule which everywhere attaches itself to poverty.'

'You do yourself injustice, Master of Ravenswood, on my word of honour,' answered his elder guest. 'I believe I know more of your affairs than you do yourself, and I hope to show you that I am interested in them; and that — in short, that your prospects are better than you apprehend. In the meantime, I can conceive nothing so respectable as the spirit which rises above misfortune, and prefers honourable privations to debt or dependence.'

Whether from fear of offending the delicacy or awakening the pride of the Master, the Lord Keeper made these allusions with an appearance of fearful and hesitating reserve, and seemed to be afraid that he was intruding too far, in venturing to touch, however lightly, upon such a topic, even when the Master had led to it. In short, he appeared at once pushed on by his desire of appearing friendly, and held back by the fear of intrusion. It was no wonder that the Master of Ravenswood, little acquainted as he then was with life, should have given this consummate courtier credit for more sincerity than was probably to be found in a score of his cast. He answered,

however, with reserve, that he was indebted to all who might think well of him: and, apologising to his guests, he left the hall, in order to make such arrangements for their entertainment as circumstances admitted.

Upon consulting with old Mysie, the accommodations for the night were easily completed, as indeed they admitted of little choice. The Master surrendered his apartment for the use of Miss Ashton, and Mysie, once a person of consequence, dressed in a black satin gown which had belonged of yore to the Master's grandmother, and had figured in the court balls of Henrietta Maria, went to attend her as lady's-maid. He next inquired after Bucklaw, and understanding he was at the change house with the huntsmen and some companions, he desired Caleb to call there, and acquaint him how he was circumstanced at Wolf's Crag; to intimate to him that it would be most convenient if he could find a bed in the hamlet, as the elder guest must necessarily be quartered in the secret chamber, the only spare bedroom which could be made fit to receive him. The Master saw no hardship in passing the night by the hall fire, wrapt in his campaign-cloak; and to Scottish domesties of the day, even of the highest rank, nay, to young men of family or fashion, on any pinch, clean straw, or a dry hay-loft, was always held good night quarters.

For the rest, Lockhard had his master's orders to bring some venison from the inn, and Caleb was to trust to his wits for the honour of his family. The Master, indeed, a second time held out his purse; but, as it was in sight of the strange servant, the butler thought himself obliged to decline what his fingers itched to clutch. 'Couldna he hae slippit it gently into my hand?' said Caleb; 'but his honour will never learn how to bear himsell in siccan cases.'

Mysie, in the meantime, according to a uniform custom in remote places in Scotland, offered the strangers the produce of her little dairy, 'while better meat was getting ready.' And according to another custom, not yet wholly in desuetude, as the storm was now drifting off to leeward, the Master carried the Keeper to the top of his highest tower to admire a wide and waste extent of view, and to 'weary for his dinner.'

CHAPTER XII

'Now dame,' quoth he, 'Je vous dis sans doute,
Had I nought of a capon but the liver,
And of your white bread nought but a shiver,
And after that a roasted pigge's head
(But I ne wold for me no beast were dead),
Then had I with you homely sufferaunce.'

CHAUCER, *Sumner's Tale.*

IT was not without some secret misgivings that Caleb set out upon his exploratory expedition. In fact, it was attended with a treble difficulty. He dared not tell his master the offence which he had that morning given to Bucklaw, just for the honour of the family; he dared not acknowledge he had been too hasty in refusing the purse; and, thirdly, he was somewhat apprehensive of unpleasant consequences upon his meeting Hayston under the impression of an affront, and probably by this time under the influence also of no small quantity of brandy.

Caleb, to do him justice, was as bold as any lion where the honour of the family of Ravenswood was concerned; but his was that considerate valour which does not delight in unnecessary risks. This, however, was a secondary consideration: the main point was to veil the indigence of the housekeeping at the castle, and to make good his vaunt of the cheer which his resources could procure, without Lockhard's assistance, and without supplies from his master. This was as prime a point of honour with him as with the generous elephant with whom we have already compared him, who, being overtasked, broke his skull through the desperate exertions which he made to discharge his duty, when he perceived they were bringing up another to his assistance.

The village which they now approached had frequently afforded the distressed butler resources upon similar emergencies; but his relations with it had been of late much altered

It was a little hamlet which straggled along the side of a creek formed by the discharge of a small brook into the sea, and was hidden from the castle, to which it had been in former times an appendage, by the intervention of the shoulder of a hill forming a projecting headland. It was called Wolf's Hope (*i.e.* Wolf's Haven), and the few inhabitants gained a precarious subsistence by manning two or three fishing-boats in the herring season, and smuggling gin and brandy during the winter months. They paid a kind of hereditary respect to the Lords of Ravenswood; but, in the difficulties of the family, most of the inhabitants of Wolf's Hope had contrived to get feu-rights[1] to their little possessions, their huts, kail-yards, and rights of commonty, so that they were emancipated from the chains of feudal dependence, and free from the various exactions with which, under every possible pretext, or without any pretext at all, the Scottish landlords of the period, themselves in great poverty, were wont to harass their still poorer tenants at will. They might be, on the whole, termed independent, a circumstance peculiarly galling to Caleb, who had been wont to exercise over them the same sweeping authority in levying contributions which was exercised in former times in England, when 'the royal purveyors, sallying forth from under the Gothic portcullis to purchase provisions with power and prerogative, instead of money, brought home the plunder of an hundred markets, and all that could be seized from a flying and hiding country, and deposited their spoil in a hundred caverns.'[2]

Caleb loved the memory and resented the downfall of that authority, which mimicked, on a petty scale, the grand contributions exacted by the feudal sovereigns. And as he fondly flattered himself that the awful rule and right supremacy, which assigned to the Barons of Ravenswood the first and most effective interest in all productions of nature within five miles of their castle, only slumbered, and was not departed for ever, he used every now and then to give the recollection of the inhabitants a little jog by some petty exaction. These were at first submitted to, with more or less readiness, by the inhabitants of the hamlet; for they had been so long used to consider the wants of the Baron and his family as having a title to be preferred to their own, that their actual independence did not convey to them an immediate sense of freedom. They resembled a

[1] That is, absolute rights of property for the payment of a sum annually, which is usually a trifle in such cases as are alluded to in the text.

[2] Burke's *Speech on Economical Reform*: *Works*, vol. iii. p. 250.

man that has been long fettered, who, even at liberty, feels in imagination the grasp of the handcuffs still binding his wrists. But the exercise of freedom is quickly followed with the natural consciousness of its immunities, as an enlarged prisoner, by the free use of his limbs, soon dispels the cramped feeling they had acquired when bound.

The inhabitants of Wolf's Hope began to grumble, to resist, and at length positively to refuse compliance with the exactions of Caleb Balderstone. It was in vain he reminded them, that when the eleventh Lord Ravenswood, called the Skipper, from his delight in naval matters, had encouraged the trade of their port by building the pier (a bulwark of stones rudely piled together), which protected the fishing-boats from the weather, it had been matter of understanding that he was to have the first stone of butter after the calving of every cow within the barony, and the first egg, thence called the Monday's egg, laid by every hen on every Monday in the year.

The feuars heard and scratched their heads, coughed, sneezed, and being pressed for answer, rejoined with one voice, 'They could not say'—the universal refuge of a Scottish peasant when pressed to admit a claim which his conscience owns, or perhaps his feelings, and his interest inclines him to deny.

Caleb, however, furnished the notables of Wolf's Hope with a note of the requisition of butter and eggs, which he claimed as arrears of the aforesaid subsidy, or kindly aid, payable as above mentioned; and having intimated that he would not be averse to compound the same for goods or money, if it was inconvenient to them to pay in kind, left them, as he hoped, to debate the mode of assessing themselves for that purpose. On the contrary, they met with a determined purpose of resisting the exaction, and were only undecided as to the mode of grounding their opposition, when the cooper, a very important person on a fishing-station, and one of the conscript fathers of the village, observed, 'That their hens had caickled mony a day for the Lords of Ravenswood, and it was time they suld caickle for those that gave them roosts and barley.' A unanimous grin intimated the assent of the assembly. 'And,' continued the orator, 'if it 's your wull, I 'll just tak a step as far as Dunse for Davie Dingwall, the writer, that 's come frae the North to settle amang us, and he 'll pit this job to rights, I 'se warrant him.'

A day was accordingly fixed for holding a grand palaver at Wolf's Hope on the subject of Caleb's requisitions, and he was invited to attend at the hamlet for that purpose.

He went with open hands and empty stomach, trusting to fill the one on his master's account and the other on his own score, at the expense of the feuars of Wolf's Hope. But, death to his hopes! as he entered the eastern end of the straggling village, the awful form of Davie Dingwall, a sly, dry, hard-fisted, shrewd country attorney, who had already acted against the family of Ravenswood, and was a principal agent of Sir William Ashton, trotted in at the western extremity, bestriding a leathern portmanteau stuffed with the feu-charters of the hamlet, and hoping he had not kept Mr. Balderstone waiting, 'as he was instructed and fully empowered to pay or receive, compound or compensate, and, in fine, to agé[1] as accords, respecting all mutual and unsettled claims whatsoever, belonging or competent to the Honourable Edgar Ravenswood, commonly called the Master of Ravenswood ——'

'The *Right* Honourable Edgar *Lord Ravenswood*,' said Caleb, with great emphasis; for, though conscious he had little chance of advantage in the conflict to ensue, he was resolved not to sacrifice one jot of honour.

'Lord Ravenswood, then,' said the man of business — 'we shall not quarrel with you about titles of courtesy — commonly called Lord Ravenswood, or Master of Ravenswood, heritable proprietor of the lands and barony of Wolf's Crag, on the one part, and to John Whitefish and others, feuars in the town of Wolf's Hope, within the barony aforesaid, on the other part.'

Caleb was conscious, from sad experience, that he would wage a very different strife with this mercenary champion than with the individual feuars themselves, upon whose old recollections, predilections, and habits of thinking he might have wrought by a hundred indirect arguments, to which their deputy-representative was totally insensible. The issue of the debate proved the reality of his apprehensions. It was in vain he strained his eloquence and ingenuity, and collected into one mass all arguments arising from antique custom and hereditary respect, from the good deeds done by the Lord of Ravenswood to the community of Wolf's Hope in former days, and from what might be expected from them in future. The writer stuck to the contents of his feu charters: he could not see it: 't was not in the bond. And when Caleb, determined to try what a little spirit would do, deprecated the consequences of Lord Ravenswood's withdrawing his protection from the burgh.

[1] *i. e.*, To act as may be necessary and legal: a Scottish law phrase.

and even hinted at his using active measures of resentment, the man of law sneered in his face.

'His clients,' he said, 'had determined to do the best they could for their own town, and he thought Lord Ravenswood, since he was a lord, might have enough to do to look after his own castle. As to any threats of stouthrief oppression, by rule of thumb, or *eia facti*, as the law termed it, he would have Mr. Balderstone recollect, that new times were not as old times; that they lived on the south of the Forth, and far from the Highlands; that his clients thought they were able to protect themselves; but should they find themselves mistaken, they would apply to the government for the protection of a corporal and four red-coats, who,' said Mr. Dingwall, with a grin, 'would be perfectly able to secure them against Lord Ravenswood, and all that he or his followers could do by the strong hand.'

If Caleb could have concentrated all the lightnings of aristocracy in his eye, to have struck dead this contemner of allegiance and privilege, he would have launched them at his head, without respect to the consequences. As it was, he was compelled to turn his course backward to the castle; and there he remained for full half a day invisible and inaccessible even to Mysie, sequestered in his own peculiar dungeon, where he sat burnishing a single pewter plate and whistling 'Maggie Lauder' six hours without intermission.

The issue of this unfortunate requisition had shut against Caleb all resources which could be derived from Wolf's Hope and its purlieus, the El Dorado, or Peru, from which, in all former cases of exigence, he had been able to extract some assistance. He had, indeed, in a manner vowed that the deil should have him, if ever he put the print of his foot within its causeway again. He had hitherto kept his word; and, strange to tell, this secession had, as he intended, in some degree, the effect of a punishment upon the refractory feuars. Mr. Balderstone had been a person in their eyes connected with a superior order of beings, whose presence used to grace their little festivities, whose advice they found useful on many occasions, and whose communications gave a sort of credit to their village. The place, they acknowledged, 'didna look as it used to do, and should do, since Mr. Caleb keepit the castle sae closely: but doubtless, touching the eggs and butter, it was a most unreasonable demand, as Mr. Dingwall had justly made manifest.

Thus stood matters betwixt the parties, when the old butler, though it was gall and wormwood to him, found himself obliged

either to acknowledge before a strange man of quality, and, what was much worse, before that stranger's servant, the total inability of Wolf's Crag to produce a dinner, or he must trust to the compassion of the feuars of Wolf's Hope. It was a dreadful degradation; but necessity was equally imperious and lawless. With these feelings he entered the street of the village.

Willing to shake himself from his companion as soon as possible, he directed Mr. Lockhard to Luckie Sma'trash's change-house, where a din, proceeding from the revels of Bucklaw, Craigengelt, and their party, sounded half-way down the street, while the red glare from the window overpowered the grey twilight which was now settling down, and glimmered against a parcel of old tubs, kegs, and barrels, piled up in the cooper's yard, on the other side of the way.

'If you, Mr. Lockhard,' said the old butler to his companion, 'will be pleased to step to the change-house where that light comes from, and where, as I judge, they are now singing "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen," ye may do your master's errand about the venison, and I will do mine about Bucklaw's bed, as I return frae getting the rest of the vivers. It 's no that the venison is actually needfu',' he added, detaining his colleague by the button, 'to make up the dinner: but as a compliment to the hunters, ye ken; and, Mr. Lockhard, if they offer ye a drink o' yill, or a cup o' wine, or a glass o' brandy, ye 'll be a wise man to take it, in case the thunner should hae soured ours at the castle, whilk is ower muckle to be dreaded.'

He then permitted Lockhard to depart; and with foot heavy as lead, and yet far lighter than his heart, stepped on through the unequal street of the straggling village, meditating on whom he ought to make his first attack. It was necessary he should find some one with whom old acknowledged greatness should weigh more than recent independence, and to whom his application might appear an act of high dignity, relenting at once and soothing. But he could not recollect an inhabitant of a mind so constructed. 'Our kail is like to be cauld eneugh too,' he reflected, as the chorus of 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen' again reached his ears. The minister — he had got his presentation from the late lord, but they had quarrelled about teinds; the brewster's wife — she had trusted long, and the bill was aye scored up, and unless the dignity of the family should actually require it, it would be a sin to distress a widow woman. None was so able — but, on the other hand, none was likely to be less willing — to stand his friend upon the present occasion, than

Gibbie Girder, the man of tubs and barrels already mentioned, who had headed the insurrection in the matter of the egg and butter subsidy. 'But a' comes o' taking folk on the right side, I trow,' quoth Caleb to himself; 'and I had ance the ill hap to say he was but a Johnny New-come in our town, and the carle bore the family an ill-will ever since. But he married a bonny young quean, Jean Lightbody, auld Lightbody's daughter, him that was in the steading of Loup-the-Dyke; and auld Lightbody was married himsell to Marion, that was about my lady in the family forty years syne. I hae had mony a day's daffing wi' Jean's mither, and they say she bides on wi' them. The carle has Jacobuses and Georgiuses baith, an ane could get at them: and sure I am, it's doing him an honour him or his never deserved at our hand, the ungracious sumph; and if he loses by us a'thegither, he is e'en cheap o't: he can spare it brawly.'

Shaking off irresolution, therefore, and turning at once upon his heel, Caleb walked hastily back to the cooper's house, lifted the latch without ceremony, and, in a moment, found himself behind the 'hallan' or partition, from which position he could, himself unseen, reconnoitre the interior of the 'but,' or kitchen apartment, of the mansion.

Reverse of the sad menage at the Castle of Wolf's Crag, a bickering fire roared up the cooper's chimney. His wife, on the one side, in her pearlings and pudding-sleeves, put the last finishing touch to her holiday's apparel, while she contemplated a very handsome and good-humoured face in a broken mirror, raised upon the 'bink' (the shelves on which the plates are disposed) for her special accommodation. Her mother, old Luckie Loup-the-Dyke, 'a canty carline' as was within twenty miles of her, according to the unanimous report of the 'cummers,' or gossips, sat by the fire in the full glory of a grogram gown, lammer beads, and a clean cockernony, whiffing a snug pipe of tobacco, and superintending the affairs of the kitchen; for sight more interesting to the anxious heart and craving entrails of the desponding seneschal than either buxom dame or canty cummer — there bubbled on the aforesaid bickering fire a huge pot, or rather cauldron, steaming with beef and brewis; while before it revolved two spits, turned each by one of the cooper's apprentices, seated in the opposite corners of the chimney, the one loaded with a quarter of mutton, while the other was graced with a fat goose and a brace of wild ducks. The sight and scent of such a land of plenty almost wholly overcame the drooping spirits of Caleb. He turned, for a moment's space, to

reconnoitre the 'ben,' or parlour end of the house, and there saw a sight scarce less affecting to his feelings — a large round table, covered for ten or twelve persons, decored (according to his own favourite term) with napery as white as snow, grand flagons of pewter, intermixed with one or two silver cups, containing, as was probable, something worthy the brilliancy of their outward appearance, clean trenchers, cutty spoons, knives and forks, sharp, burnished, and prompt for action, which lay all displayed as for an especial festival.

'The devil 's in the peddling tub-coopering carle!' muttered Caleb, in all the envy of astonishment; 'it 's a shame to see the like o' them gusting their gabs at sic a rate. But if some o' that gude cheer does not find its way to Wolf's Crag this night, my name is not Caleb Balderstone.'

So resolving, he entered the apartment, and, in all courteous greeting, saluted both the mother and the daughter. Wolf's Crag was the court of the barony, Caleb prime minister at Wolf's Crag; and it has ever been remarked that, though the masculine subject who pays the taxes sometimes growls at the courtiers by whom they are imposed, the said courtiers continue, nevertheless, welcome to the fair sex, to whom they furnish the newest small-talk and the earliest fashions. Both the dames were, therefore, at once about old Caleb's neck, setting up their throats together by way of welcome.

'Ay, sirs, Mr. Balderstone, and is this you? A sight of you is gude for sair een. Sit down — sit down; the gudeman will be blithe to see you — ye nar saw him sae cadgy in your life; but we are to christen our bit wean the night, as ye will hae heard, and doubtless ye will stay and see the ordinance. We hae killed a wether, and ane o' our lads has been out wi' his gun at the moss; ye used to like wild-fowl.'

'Na, na, gudewife,' said Caleb; 'I just keekit in to wish ye joy, and I wad be glad to hae spoken wi' the gudeman, but ——' moving, as if to go away.

'The ne'er a fit ye 's gang,' said the elder dame, laughing and holding him fast, with a freedom which belonged to their old acquaintance; 'wha kens what ill it may bring to the bairn, if ye owerlook it in that gate?'

'But I 'm in a preceese hurry, gudewife,' said the butler, suffering himself to be dragged to a seat without much resistance; 'and as to eating,' for he observed the mistress of the dwelling bustling about to place a trencher for him — 'as for eating — lack-a-day, we are just killed up yonder wi' eating

frae morning to night! It 's shamefu' epicurism; but that 's what we hae gotten frae the English pock-puddings.'

'Hout, never mind the English pock-puddings,' said Luckie Lightbody; 'try our puddings, Mr. Balderstone; there is black pudding and white-hass; try whilk ye like best.'

'Baith gude — baith excellent — canna be better; but the very smell is eneugh for me that hae dined sae lately (the faithful wretch had fasted since daybreak). But I wadna affront your housewifeskep, gudewife; and, with your permission, I'se e'en pit them in my napkin, and eat them to my supper at e'en, for I am wearied of Mysie's pastry and nonsense; ye ken landward dainties aye pleased me best, Marion, and landward lasses too (looking at the cooper's wife). Ne'er a bit but she looks far better than when she married Gilbert, and then she was the bonniest lass in our parochine and the neist till 't. But gawsie cow, goodly calf.'

The women smiled at the compliment each to herself, and they smiled again to each other as Caleb wrapt up the puddings in a towel which he had brought with him, as a dragoon carries his foraging bag to receive what may fall in his way.

'And what news at the castle?' quo' the gudewife.

'News! The bravest news ye ever heard — the Lord Keeper 's up yonder wi' his fair daughter, just ready to fling her at my lord's head, if he winna tak her out o' his arms; and I'se warrant he 'll stitch our auld lands of Ravenswood to her petticoat tail.'

'Eh! sirs — ay! — and will he hae her? and is she weel-favoured? and what 's the colour o' her hair? and does she wear a habit or a railly?' were the questions which the females showered upon the butler.

'Hout tout! it wad tak a man a day to answer a' your questions, and I hae hardly a minute. Where 's the gudeman?'

'Awa' to fetch the minister,' said Mrs. Girder, 'precious Mr. Peter Bide-the-Bent, frae the Mosshead; the honest man has the rheumatism wi' lying in the hills in the persecution.'

'Ay! a Whig and a mountain-man, nae less!' said Caleb, with a peevishness he could not suppress. 'I hae seen the day, Luckie, when worthy Mr. Cuffcushion and the service-book would hae served your turn (to the elder dame), or ony honest woman in like circumstances.'

'And that 's true too,' said Mrs. Lightbody, 'but what can a body do? Jean maun baith sing her psalms and busk her

cockernony the gate the gudeman likes, and nae ither gate; for he 's maister and mair at hame, I can tell ye, Mr. Balderstone.'

'Ay, ay, and does he guide the gear too?' said Caleb, to whose projects masculine rule boded little good.

'Ilka penny on 't; but he 'll dress her as dink as a daisy, as ye see; sae she has little reason to complain: where there 's ane better aff there 's ten waur.'

'Aweel, gudewife,' said Caleb, crestfallen, but not beaten off, 'that wasna the way ye guided your gudeman; but ilka land has its ain lauch. I maun be ganging. I just wanted to round in the gudeman's lug, that I heard them say up-bye yonder that Peter Puncheon, that was cooper to the Queen's stores at the Timmer Burse at Leith, is dead; sae I thought that maybe a word frae my lord to the Lord Keeper might hae served Gilbert; but since he 's frae hame ——'

'O, but ye maun stay his hame-coming,' said the dame. 'I aye telled the gudeman ye meant weel to him; but he taks the tout at every bit lippening word.'

'Aweel, I 'll stay the last minute I can.'

'And so,' said the handsome young spouse of Mr. Girder, 'ye think this Miss Ashton is weel-favoured? Troth, and sae should she, to set up for our young lord, with a face and a hand, and a seat on his horse, that might become a king's son. D' ye ken that he aye glowers up at my window, Mr. Balderstone, when he chances to ride thro' the town? Sae I hae a right to ken what like he is, as weel as ony body.'

'I ken that brawly,' said Caleb, 'for I hae heard his lordship say the cooper's wife had the blackest ee in the barony; and I said, "Weel may that be, my lord, for it was her mither's afore her, as I ken to my cost." Eh, Marion? Ha, ha, ha! Ah! these were merry days!'

'Hout awa', auld carle,' said the old dame, 'to speak sic daffing to young folk. But, Jean — fie, woman, dinna ye hear the bairn greet? I'se warrant it 's that dreary-weid[1] has come ower 't again.'

Up got mother and grandmother, and scoured away, jostling each other as they ran, into some remote corner of the tenement, where the young hero of the evening was deposited. When Caleb saw the coast fairly clear, he took an invigorating pinch of snuff, to sharpen and confirm his resolution.

'Cauld be my cast,' thought he, 'if either Bide-the-Bent or Girder taste that broche of wild-fowl this evening'; and then

[1] *Weid*, a feverish cold; a disorder incident to infants and to females, is so called.

addressing the eldest turnspit, a boy of about eleven years old, and putting a penny into his hand, he said, 'Here is twal pennies,[1] my man; carry that ower to Mrs. Sma'trash, and bid her till my mill wi' snishing, and I'll turn the broche for you in the meantime; and she will gie ye a ginger bread stap for your pains.'

No sooner was the elder boy departed on this mission than Caleb, looking the remaining turnspit gravely and steadily in the face, removed from the fire the spit bearing the wild fowl of which he had undertaken the charge, clapped his hat on his head, and fairly marched off with it. He stopped at the door of the change house only to say, in a few brief words, that Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw was not to expect a bed that evening in the castle.

If this message was too briefly delivered by Caleb, it became absolute rudeness when conveyed through the medium of a suburb landlady: and Bucklaw was, as a more calm and temperate man might have been, highly incensed. Captain Craigengelt proposed, with the unanimous applause of all present, that they should course the old fox (meaning Caleb) ere he got to cover, and toss him in a blanket. But Lockhard intimated to his master's servants and those of Lord Bittlebrains, in a tone of authority, that the slightest impertinence to the Master of Ravenswood's domestic would give Sir William Ashton the highest offence. And having so said, in a manner sufficient to prevent any aggression on their part, he left the public house, taking along with him two servants loaded with such provisions as he had been able to procure, and overtook Caleb just when he had cleared the village.

[1] Monetæ Scoticæ, scilicet.

CHAPTER XIII

Should I take aught of you? 'T is true I begged now;
And what is worse than that, I stole a kindness;
And, what is worst of all, I lost my way in't.

Wit without Money.

THE face of the little boy, sole witness of Caleb's infringement upon the laws at once of property and hospitality, would have made a good picture. He sat motionless, as if he had witnessed some of the spectral appearances which he had heard told of in a winter's evening; and as he forgot his own duty, and allowed his spit to stand still, he added to the misfortunes of the evening by suffering the mutton to burn as black as coal. He was first recalled from his trance of astonishment by a hearty cuff administered by Dame Lightbody, who, in whatever other respects she might conform to her name, was a woman strong of person, and expert in the use of her hands, as some say her deceased husband had known to his cost.

'What garr'd ye let the roast burn, ye ill-cleekit gude-for-nought?'

'I dinna ken,' said the boy.

'And where 's that ill-deedy gett, Giles?'

'I dinna ken,' blubbered the astonished declarant.

'And where 's Mr. Balderstone? and abune a', and in the name of council and kirk session, that I suld say sae, where 's the broche wi' the wild-fowl?'

As Mrs. Girder here entered, and joined her mother's exclamations, screaming into one ear while the old lady deafened the other, they succeeded in so utterly confounding the unhappy urchin, that he could not for some time tell his story at all, and it was only when the elder boy returned that the truth began to dawn on their minds.

'Weel, sirs!' said Mrs. Lightbody, 'wha wad hae thought o' Caleb Balderstone playing an auld acquaintance sic a pliskie!'

'O, weary on him!' said the spouse of Mr. Girder; 'and

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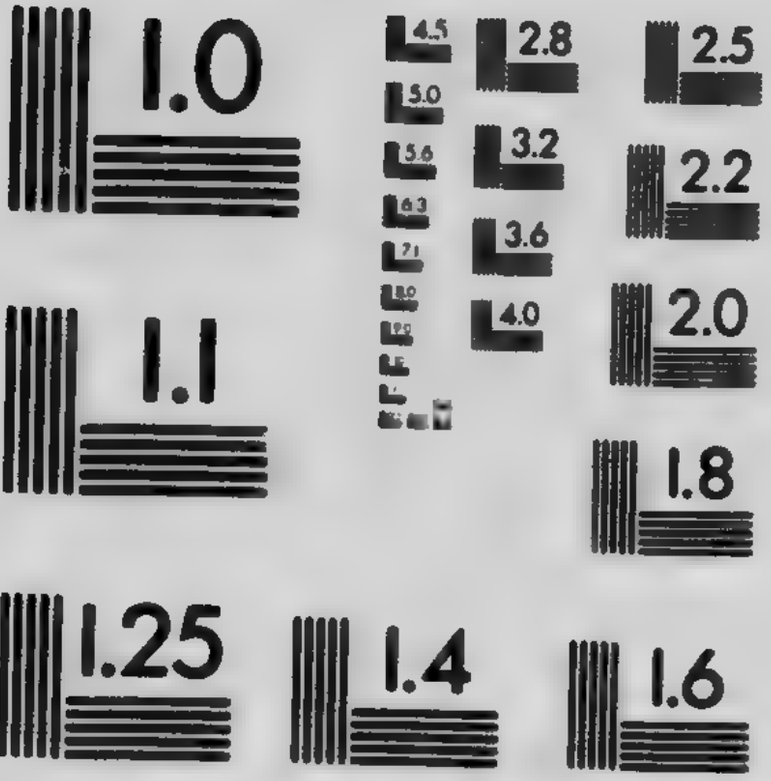

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what am I to say to the gudeman? He 'll brain me, if there wasna anither woman in a' Wolf's Hope.'

'Hout tout, silly quean,' said the mother; 'na, na, it 's come to muckle, but it 's no come to that neither; for an he brain you he maun brain me, and I have garr'd his betters stand back. Hands aff is fair play; we maunna heed a bit flyting.'

The tramp of horses now announced the arrival of the cooper, with the minister. They had no sooner dismounted than they made for the kitchen fire, for the evening was cool after the thunderstorm, and the woods wet and dirty. The young gude wife, strong in the charms of her Sunday gown and biggonets, threw herself in the way of receiving the first attack, while her mother, like the veteran division of the Roman legion, remained in the rear, ready to support her in case of necessity. Both hoped to protract the discovery of what had happened - the mother, by interposing her bustling person betwixt Mr. Girder and the fire, and the daughter, by the extreme cordiality with which she received the minister and her husband, and the anxious fears which she expressed lest they should have 'gotten cauld.'

'Cauld!' quoth the husband, surlily, for he was not of that class of lords and masters whose wives are viceroys over them, 'we 'll be cauld eneugh, I think, if ye dinna let us in to the fire.'

And so saying, he burst his way through both lines of defence; and, as he had a careful eye over his property of every kind, he perceived at one glance the absence of the spit with its savoury burden. 'What the deil, woman ——'

'Fie for shame!' exclaimed both the women; 'and before Mr. Bide-the-Bent!'

'I stand reproved,' said the cooper; 'but ——'

'The taking in our mouths the name of the great enemy of our souls,' said Mr. Bide-the-Bent ——

'I stand reproved,' said the cooper.

'— Is an exposing ourselves to his temptations,' continued the reverend monitor, 'and an inviting, or, in some sort, a compelling, of him to lay aside his other trafficking with unhappy persons, and wait upon those in whose speech his name is frequent.'

'Weel, weel, Mr. Bide-the-Bent, can a man do mair than stand reproved?' said the cooper; 'but just let me ask the women what for they hae dished the wild-fowl before we came.'

'They arena dished, Gilbert,' said his wife; 'but — but an accident ——'

'What accident?' said Girder, with flashing eyes. 'Nae ill come ower them, I trust? Uh?'

His wife, who stood much in awe of him, durst not reply, but her mother bustled up to her support, with arms disposed as if they were about to be a-kimbo at the next reply. — 'I gied them to an acquaintance of mine, Gibbie Girder; and wi' at about it now?'

Her excess of assurance struck Girder mute for an instant. 'And *ye* gied the wild-fowl, the best end of our christening dinner, to a friend of yours, ye auld rudas! And what might *his* name be, I pray ye?'

'Just worthy Mr. Caleb Balderstone — frae Wolf's Crag,' answered Marion, prompt and prepared for battle.

Girder's wrath foamed over all restraint. If there was a circumstance which could have added to the resentment he felt, it was that this extravagant donation had been made in favour of our friend Caleb, towards whom, for reasons to which the reader is no stranger, he nourished a decided resentment. He raised his riding-wand against the elder matron, but she stood firm, collected in herself, and undauntedly brandished the iron ladle with which she had just been 'flambing' (*Anglicè*, basting) the roast of mutton. Her weapon was certainly the better, and her arm not the weakest of the two; so that Gilbert thought it safest to turn short off upon his wife, who had by this time hatched a sort of hysterical whine, which greatly moved the minister, who was in fact as simple and kind-hearted a creature as ever breathed. 'And you, ye thowless jade, to sit still and see my substance disponed upon to an idle, drunken, reprobate, worm-eaten serving-man, just because he kittles the lugs o' a silly auld wife wi' useless clavers, and every twa words a lee? I'll gar you as gude ——'

Here the minister interposed, both by voice and action, while Dame Lightbody threw herself in front of her daughter, and flourished her ladle.

'Am I no to chastise my ain wife?' exclaimed the cooper, very indignantly.

'Ye may chastise your ain wife if you like,' answered Dame Lightbody; 'but ye shall never lay finger on my daughter, and that ye may found upon.'

'For shame, Mr. Girder!' said the clergyman; 'this is what I little expected to have seen of you, that you suld give rein

to your sinful passions against your nearest and your dearest, and this night too, when ye are called to the most solemn duty of a Christian parent; and a' for what? For a reduced dozen of creature-comforts, as worthless as they are unneedful.

'Worthless!' exclaimed the cooper. 'A better guse never walkit on stubble; twa finer, dentier wild ducks never wat a feather.'

'Be it sae, neighbour,' rejoined the minister; 'but see what superfluities are yet revolving before your fire. I have seen the day when ten of the bannocks which stand upon that board would have been an acceptable dainty to as many men, that were starving on hills and bogs, and in caves of the earth, for the Gospel's sake.'

'And that's what vexes me maist of a',' said the cooper, anxious to get some one to sympathise with his not altogether causeless anger; 'an the quean had gien it to ony suffering sant, or to ony body ava but that reaving, lying, oppressing Tory villain, that rade in the wicked troop of militia when it was commanded out against the saints at Bothwell Brig by the auld tyrant Allan Ravenswood, that is gane to his place, I wad the less hae minded it. But to gie the principal part o' the feast to the like o' him ——!'

'Aweel, Gilbert,' said the minister, 'and dinna ye see a high judgment in this? The seed of the righteous are not seen begging their bread: think of the son of a powerful oppressor being brought to the pass of supporting his household from your fulness.'

'And, besides,' said the wife, 'it wasna for Lord Ravenswood neither, an he wad hear but a body speak: it was to help to entertain the Lord Keeper, as they ca' him, that's up yonder at Wolf's Crag.'

'Sir William Ashton at Wolf's Crag!' ejaculated the astonished man of hoops and staves.

'And hand and glove wi' Lord Ravenswood,' added Dame Lightbody.

'Doited idiot! that auld, clavering sneckdrawer wad gar ye trow the moon is made of green cheese. The Lord Keeper and Ravenswood! they are cat and dog, hare and hound.'

'I 'll ye they are man and wife, and gree better than some others that are sae,' retorted the mother-in-law; 'forbye, Peter Puncheon, that 's cooper to the Queen's stores, is dead, and the place is to fill, and ——'

'Od guide us, will ye haud your skirling tongues!' said

,—for we are to remark, that this explanation was given like a catch for two voices, the younger dame, much encouraged by the turn of the debate, taking up and repeating in a higher tone the words as fast as they were uttered by her mother.

'The gudewife says naething but what 's true, maister,' said Girder's foreman, who had come in during the fray. 'I saw the Lord Keeper's servants drinking and driving ower at Luckie Sma'trash's, ower-bye yonder.'

'And is their maister up at Wolf's Crag?' said Girder.

'Ay, troth is he,' replied his man of confidence.

'And friends wi' Ravenswood?'

'It 's like sae,' answered the foreman, 'since he is putting up[1] wi' him.'

'And Peter Puncheon 's dead?'

'Ay, ay, Puncheon has leaked out at last, the auld carle,' said the foreman; 'mony a dribble o' brandy has gaen through him in his day. But as for the broche and the wild-fowl, the saddle 's no aff your mare yet, maister, and I could follow and bring it back, for Mr. Balderstone 's no far aff the town yet.'

'Do sae, Will; and come here, I 'll tell ye what to do when ye owertake him.'

He relieved the females of his presence, and gave Will his private instructions.

'A bonny-like thing,' said the mother-in-law, as the cooper re-entered the apartment, 'to send the innocent lad after an armed man, when ye ken Mr. Balderstone aye wears a rapier, and whiles a dirk into the bargain.'

'I trust,' said the minister, 'ye have reflected weel on what ye have done, lest you should minister cause of strife, of which it is my duty to say, he who affordeth matter, albeit he himself striketh not, is in no manner guiltless.'

'Never fash your beard, Mr. Bide-the-Bent,' replied Girder; 'ane canna get their breath out between wives and ministers. I ken best how to turn my ain cake. Jean, serve up the dinner, and nae mair about it.'

Nor did he again allude to the deficiency in the course of the evening.

Meantime, the foreman, mounted on his master's steed, and charged with his special orders, pricked swiftly forth in pursuit of the marauder Caleb. That personage, it may be imagined, did not linger by the way. He intermitted even his

[1] Taking up his abode.

dearly-beloved chatter, for the purpose of making more haste, only assuring Mr. Lockhard that he had made the purveyor's wife give the wild-fowl a few turns before the fire, in case that Mysie, who had been so much alarmed by the thunder, should not have her kitchen-grate in full splendour. Meanwhile, alleging the necessity of being at Wolf's Crag as soon as possible, he pushed on so fast that his companions could scarce keep up with him. He began already to think he was safe from pursuit, having gained the summit of the swelling eminence which divides Wolf's Crag from the village, when he heard the distant tread of a horse, and a voice which shouted at intervals, 'Mr. Caleb — Mr. Balderstone — Mr. Caleb Balderstone — hollo — bide a wee!'

Caleb, it may be well believed, was in no hurry to acknowledge the summons. First, he would not hear it, and faced his companions down, that it was the echo of the wind; then he said it was not worth stopping for; and, at length, halting reluctantly, as the figure of the horseman appeared through the shades of the evening, he bent up his whole soul to the task of defending his prey, threw himself into an attitude of dignity, advanced the spit, which in his grasp might with its burden seem both spear and shield, and firmly resolved to die rather than surrender it.

What was his astonishment, when the cooper's foreman, riding up and addressing him with respect, told him, 'His master was very sorry he was absent when he came to his dwelling, and grieved that he could not tarry the christening dinner: and that he had taen the freedom to send a sma' runlet of sack, and ane anker of brandy, as he understood there were guests at the castle, and that they were short of preparation.'

I have heard somewhere a story of an elderly gentleman who was pursued by a bear that had gotten loose from its muzzle, until completely exhausted. In a fit of desperation, he faced round upon Bruin and lifted his cane; at the sight of which the instinct of discipline prevailed, and the animal, instead of tearing him to pieces, rose up upon his hind legs and instantly began to shuffle a saraband. Not less than the joyful surprise of the senior, who had supposed himself in the extremity of peril from which he was thus unexpectedly relieved, was that of our excellent friend Caleb, when he found the pursuer intended to add to his prize, instead of bereaving him of it. He recovered his latitude, however, instantly, so soon as the foreman, stooping from his nag, where he sate perched betwixt the

two barrels, whispered in his ear — 'If ony thing about Peter Puncheon's place could be airted their way, John Girder wad mak it better to the Master of Ravenswood than a pair of new gloves; and that he wad be blithe to speak wi' Maister Balderstone on that head, and he wad find him as pliant as a hoop-willow in a' that he could wish of him.'

Caleb heard all this without rendering any answer, except that of all great men from Louis XIV. downwards, namely, 'We will see about it'; and then added aloud, for the edification of Mr. Lockhard — 'Your master has acted with becoming civility and attention in forwarding the liquors, and I will not fail to represent it properly to my Lord Ravenswood. And, my lad,' he said, 'you may ride on to the castle, and if none of the servants are returned, whilk is to be dreaded, as they make day and night of it when they are out of sight, ye may put them into the porter's lodge, whilk is on the right hand of the great entry; the porter has got leave to go to see his friends, sae ye will meet no ane to steer ye.'

The foreman, having received his orders, rode on; and having deposited the casks in the deserted and ruinous porter's lodge, he returned unquestioned by any one. Having thus executed his master's commission, and doffed his bonnet to Caleb and his company as he repassed them in his way to the village, he returned to have his share of the christening festivity.[1]

[1] See Raid of Caleb Balderstone. Note 5.

CHAPTER XIV

As, to the Autumn breeze's bugle sound,
Various and vague the dry leaves dance their round;
Or, from the garner-door, on ether borne,
The chaff flies devious from the winnow'd corn;
So vague, so devious, at the breath of heaven,
From their fix'd aim are mortal counsels driv'n.

Anonymous.

WE left Caleb Balderstone in the extremity of triumph at the success of his various achievements for the honour of the house of Ravenswood. When he had mustered and marshalled his dishes of divers kinds, a more royal provision had not been seen in Wolf's Crag since the funeral feast of its deceased lord. Great was the glory of the serving-man, as he 'decored' the old oaken table with a clean cloth, and arranged upon it carbonaded venison and roasted wild-fowl, with a glance, every now and then, as if to upbraid the incredulity of his master and his guests; and with many a story, more or less true, was Lockhard that evening regaled concerning the ancient grandeur of Wolf's Crag, and the sway of its barons over the country in their neighborhood.

'A vassal scarce held a calf or a lamb his ain, till he had first asked if the Lord of Ravenswood was pleased to accept it; and they were obliged to ask the lord's consent before they married in these days, and mony a merry tale they tell about that right as weel as others. And although,' said Caleb, 'these times are not like the gude auld times, when authority had its right, yet true it is, Mr. Lockhard, and you yourself may partly have remarked, that we of the house of Ravenswood do our endeavour in keeping up, by all just and lawful exertion of our baronial authority, that due and fitting connexion betwixt superior and vassal, whilk is in some danger of falling into desuetude, owing to the general license and misrule of these present unhappy times.'

'Umph!' said Mr. Lockhard; 'and if I may inquire, Mr. Balderstone, pray do you find your people at the village yonder

amenable? for I must needs say, that at Ravenswood Castle, now pertaining to my master, the Lord Keeper, ye have not left behind ye the most compliant set of tenantry.'

'Ah! but Mr. Lockhard,' replied Caleb, 'ye must consider there has been a change of hands, and the auld lord might expect twa turns frae them, when the new-comer canna get ane. A dour and fractious set they were, thae tenants of Ravenswood, and ill to live wi' when they dinna ken their master; and if your master put them mad ance, the whole country will not put them down.'

'Troth,' said Mr. Lockhard, 'an such be the case, I think the wisest thing for us a' wad be to hammer up a match between your young lord and our winsome young leddy up-bye there; and Sir William might just stitch your auld barony to her gown-sleeve, and he wad sune cuittle[1] another out o' somebody else, sic a lang head as he has.'

Caleb shook his head. 'I wish,' he said—'I wish that may answer, Mr. Lockhard. There are auld prophecies about this house I wad like ill to see fulfilled wi' my auld een, that has seen evil eneugh already.'

'Pshaw! never mind freits,' said his brother butler; 'if the young folk liked ane anither, they wad make a winsome couple. But, to say truth, there is a leddy sits in our hall-neuk, maun have her hand in that as weel as in every other job. But there's no harm in drinking to their healths, and I will fill Mrs Mysie a cup of Mr. Girder's canary.'

While they thus enjoyed themselves in the kitchen, the company in the hall were not less pleasantly engaged. So soon as Ravenswood had determined upon giving the Lord Keeper such hospitality as he had to offer, he deemed it incumbent on him to assume the open and courteous brow of a well-pleased host. It has been often remarked, that when a man commences by acting a character, he frequently ends by adopting it in good earnest. In the course of an hour or two, Ravenswood, to his own surprise, found himself in the situation of one who frankly does his best to entertain welcome and honoured guests. How much of this change in his disposition was to be ascribed to the beauty and simplicity of Miss Ashton, to the readiness with which she accommodated herself to the inconveniences of her situation; how much to the smooth and plausible conversation of the Lord Keeper, remarkably gifted with those words which

[1] *Cuittle* may answer to the elegant modern phrase *diddle*.

win the ear, must be left to the reader's ingenuity to conjecture. But Ravenswood was insensible to neither.

The Lord Keeper was a veteran statesman, well acquainted with courts and cabinets, and intimate with all the various turns of public affairs during the last eventful years of the 17th century. He could talk, from his own knowledge, of men and events, in a way which failed not to win attention, and had the peculiar art, while he never said a word which committed himself, at the same time to persuade the hearer that he was speaking without the least shadow of scrupulous caution or reserve. Ravenswood, in spite of his prejudices and real grounds of resentment, felt himself at once amused and instructed in listening to him, while the statesman, whose inward feelings had at first so much impeded his efforts to make himself known, had now regained all the ease and fluency of a silver-tongued lawyer of the very highest order.

His daughter did not speak much, but she smiled; and what she did say argued a submissive gentleness, and a desire to give pleasure, which, to a proud man like Ravenswood, was more fascinating than the most brilliant wit. Above all, he could not but observe that, whether from gratitude or from some other motive, he himself, in his deserted and unprovided hall, was as much the object of respectful attention to his guests as he would have been when surrounded by all the appliances and means of hospitality proper to his high birth. All deficiencies passed unobserved, or, if they did not escape notice, it was to praise the substitutes which Caleb had contrived to supply the want of the usual accommodations. Where a smile was unavoidable, it was a very good-humoured one, and often coupled with some well-turned compliment, to show how much the guests esteemed the merits of their noble host, how little they thought of the inconveniences with which they were surrounded. I am not sure whether the pride of being found to outbalance, in virtue of his own personal merit, all the disadvantages of fortune, did not make as favourable an impression upon the haughty heart of the Master of Ravenswood as the conversation of the father and the beauty of Lucy Ashton.

The hour of repose arrived. The Keeper and his daughter retired to their apartments, which were 'decored' more properly than could have been anticipated. In making the necessary arrangements, Mysie had indeed enjoyed the assistance of a gossip who had arrived from the village upon an exploratory expedition, but had been arrested by Caleb, and impressed into

the domestic drudgery of the evening: so that, instead of returning home to describe the dress and person of the grand young lady, she found herself compelled to be active in the domestic economy of Wolf's Crag.

According to the custom of the time, the Master of Ravenswood attended the Lord Keeper to his apartment, followed by Caleb, who placed on the table, with all the ceremonials due to torches of wax, two rudely-framed tallow-candles, such as in those days were only used by the peasantry, hooped in paltry clasps of wire, which served for candlesticks. He then disappeared, and presently entered with two earthen flagons (the china, he said, had been little used since my lady's time), one filled with canary wine, the other with brandy.[1] The canary sack, unheeding all probabilities of detention, he declared had been twenty years in the cellars of Wolf's Crag, 'though it was not for him to speak before their honours; the brandy — it was weel-kenn'd liquor, as mild as mead and as strong as Samson; it had been in the house ever since the memorable revel, in which auld Micklestob had been slain at the head of the stair by Jamie of Jenklebrae, on account of the honour of the worshipful Lady Muirend, wha was in some sort an ally of the family; natheless ——'

'But to cut that matter short, Mr. Caleb,' said the Keeper, 'perhaps you will favour me with a ewer of water.'

'God forbid your lordship should drink water in this family,' replied Caleb, 'to the disgrace of so honourable an house!'

'Nevertheless, if his lordship have a fancy,' said the Master, smiling, 'I think you might indulge him; for, if I mistake not, there has been water drank here at no distant date, and with good relish too.'

'To be sure, if his lordship has a fancy,' said Caleb; and re-entering with a jug of pure element — 'He will scarce find such water onywhere as is drawn frae the well at Wolf's Crag; nevertheless ——'

'Nevertheless, we must leave the Lord Keeper to his repose in the [illegible] chamber of ours,' said the Master of Ravenswood, interrupting [illegible]dkatie domestic, who immediately turning to the [illegible] with a profound reverence, prepared to usher his master [illegible] the secret chamber.

But the Lord Keeper prevented his host's departure. — 'I have but one [illegible] to the Master of Ravenswood, Mr. Caleb, and I [illegible] will excuse your waiting.'

[1] Ancient [illegible] Note 6.

With a second reverence, lower than the former, Caleb withdrew; and his master stood motionless, expecting, with considerable embarrassment, what was to close the events of a day fraught with unexpected incidents.

'Master of Ravenswood,' said Sir William Ashton, with some embarrassment, 'I hope you understand the Christian law too well to suffer the sun to set upon your anger.'

The Master blushed and replied, 'He had no occasion that evening to exercise the duty enjoined upon him by his Christian faith.'

'I should have thought otherwise,' said his guest, 'considering the various subjects of dispute and litigation which have unhappily occurred more frequently than was desirable or necessary betwixt the late honourable lord, your father, and myself.'

'I could wish, my lord,' said Ravenswood, agitated by suppressed emotion, 'that reference to these circumstances [illegible] be made anywhere rather than under my father's roof.'

'I should have felt the delicacy of this appeal at another time,' said Sir William Ashton, 'but now I must proceed with what I mean to say. I have suffered too much in my own mind, from the false delicacy which prevented my soliciting with earnestness, what indeed I frequently requested, a personal communing with your father: much distress of mind to him and to me might have been prevented.'

'It is true,' said Ravenswood, after a moment's reflection, 'I have heard my father say your lordship had proposed a personal interview.'

'Proposed, my dear Master? I did indeed propose it; but I ought to have begged, entreated, beseeched it. I ought to have torn away the veil which interested persons had stretched betwixt us, and shown myself as I was, willing to sacrifice a considerable part even of my legal right, in order to conciliate feelings so natural as his must be [illegible] to have been. Let me say for myself, my young friend, for so I will call you, that had your father and I spent the same time together which my good fortune has allowed me to-day to pass in your company, it is possible the feud might yet have enjoyed one of the most respectable of its ancient nobility, and I should have been spared the pain of parting in enmity from a person whose general character I so much admired and honoured.'

He put his handkerchief to his eyes. Ravenswood also was moved, but awaited in silence the progress of this extraordinary communication.

'It is necessary,' continued the Lord Keeper, 'and proper that you should understand, that there have been many points betwixt us, in which, although I judged it proper that there should be an exact ascertainment of my legal rights by the decree of a court of justice, yet it was never my intention to press them beyond the verge of equity.

'My lord!' said the Master of Ravenswood, 'it is unnecessary to pursue this topic farther. What the law will give you, or has given you, you enjoy — or you shall enjoy; neither my father nor myself would have received anything on the footing of favour.'

'Favour! No, you misunderstand me,' resumed the Keeper; 'or rather you are no lawyer. A right may be good in law, and ascertained to be so, which yet a man of honour may not in every case care to avail himself of.'

'I am sorry for it, my lord,' said the Master.

'Nay, nay,' retorted his guest, 'you speak like a young counsellor; your spirit goes before your wit. There are many things still open for decision betwixt us. Can you blame me, an old man desirous of peace, and in the castle of a young nobleman who has saved my daughter's life and my own, that I am desirous, anxiously desirous, that these should be settled on the most liberal principles?'

The old man kept fast hold of the Master's passive hand as he spoke, and made it impossible for him, be his predetermination what it would, to return any other than an acquiescent reply; and wishing his guest good-night, he postponed farther conference until the next morning.

Ravenswood hurried into the hall, where he was to spend the night, and for a time traversed its pavement with a disordered and rapid pace. His mortal foe was under his roof, yet his sentiments towards him were neither those of a feudal enemy nor of a true Christian. He felt as if he could neither forgive him in the one character, nor follow forth his vengeance in the other, but that he was making a base and dishonourable composition betwixt his resentment against the father and his affection for his daughter. He cursed himself, as he hurried to and fro in the pale moonlight, and more ruddy gleams of the expiring wood-fire. He threw open and shut the latticed windows with violence, as if alike impatient of the admission and exclusion of free air. At length, however, the torrent of passion foamed off its madness, and he flung himself into the chair which he proposed as his place of repose for the night.

'If, in reality,' such were the calmer thoughts that followed the first tempest of his passion — 'if, in reality, this man desires no more than the law allows him — if he is willing to adjust even his acknowledged rights upon an equitable footing, what could be my father's cause of complaint? — what is mine? Those from whom we won our ancient possessions fell under the sword of my ancestors, and left lands and livings to the conquerors; we sink under the force of the law, now too powerful for the Scottish chivalry. Let us parley with the victors of the day, as if we had been besieged in our fortress, and without hope of relief. This man may be other than I have thought him; and his daughter — but I have resolved not to think of her.'

He wrapt his cloak around him, fell asleep, and dreamed of Lucy Ashton till daylight gleamed through the lattices.

CHAPTER XV

We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
Past hope sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
To lift them up, but rather set our feet
Upon their heads to press them to the bottom,
As I must yield with you I practised it;
But now I see you in a way to rise,
I can and will assist you.

New Way to pay Old Debts.

THE Lord Keeper carried with him, to a couch harder than he was accustomed to stretch himself upon, the same ambitious thoughts and political perplexities which drive sleep from the softest down that ever spread a bed of state. He had sailed long enough amid the contending tides and currents of the time to be sensible of their peril, and of the necessity of trimming his vessel to the prevailing wind, if he would have her escape shipwreck in the storm. The nature of his talents, and the timorousness of disposition connected with them, had made him assume the pliability of the versatile old Earl of Northampton, who explained the art by which he kept his ground during all the changes of state, from the reign of Henry VIII. to that of Elizabeth, by the frank avowal, that he was born of the willow, not of the oak. It had accordingly been Sir William Ashton's policy, on all occasions, to watch the changes in the political horizon, and, ere yet the conflict was decided, to negotiate some interest for himself with the party most likely to prove victorious. His time-serving disposition was well known, and excited the contempt of the more daring leaders of both factions in the state. But his talents were of a useful and practical kind, and his legal knowledge held in high estimation; and they so far counterbalanced other deficiencies that those in power were glad to use and to reward, though without absolutely trusting or greatly respecting, him.

The Marquis of A—— had used his utmost influence to

effect a change in the Scottish cabinet, and his schemes had been of late so well laid and so ably supported, that there appeared a very great chance of his proving ultimately successful. He did not, however, feel so strong or so confident as to neglect any means of drawing recruits to his standard. The acquisition of the Lord Keeper was deemed of some importance, and a friend, perfectly acquainted with his circumstances and character, became responsible for his political conversion.

When this gentleman arrived at Ravenswood Castle upon a visit, the real purpose of which was disguised under general courtesy, he found the prevailing fear which at present beset the Lord Keeper was that of danger to his own person from the Master of Ravenswood. The language which the blind sibyl, Old Alice, had used; the sudden appearance of the Master, armed, and within his precincts, immediately after he had been warned against danger from him; the cold and haughty return received in exchange for the acknowledgments with which he loaded him for his timely protection, had all made a strong impression on his imagination.

So soon as the Marquis's political agent found how the wind sat, he began to insinuate fears and doubts of another kind, scarce less calculated to affect the Lord Keeper. He inquired with seeming interest, whether the proceedings in Sir William's complicated litigation with the Ravenswood family were out of court, and settled without the possibility of appeal. The Lord Keeper answered in the affirmative: but his interrogator was too well informed to be imposed upon. He pointed out to him, by unanswerable arguments, that some of the most important points which had been decided in his favour against the house of Ravenswood were liable, under the Treaty of Union, to be reviewed by the British House of Peers, a court of equity of which the Lord Keeper felt an instinctive dread. This course came instead of an appeal to the old Scottish Parliament, or, as it was technically termed, 'a protestation for remeid in law.'

The Lord Keeper, after he had for some time disputed the legality of such a proceeding, was compelled, at length, to comfort himself with the improbability of the young Master of Ravenswood's finding friends in parliament capable of stirring in so weighty an affair.

'Do not comfort yourself with that false hope,' said his wily friend; 'it is possible that, in the next session of Parliament, young Ravenswood may find more friends and favour even than your lordship.'

'That would be a sight worth seeing,' said the Keeper, scornfully.

'And yet,' said his friend, 'such things have been seen ere now, and in our own time. There are many at the head of affairs even now that a few years ago were under hiding for their lives; and many a man now dines on plate of silver that was fain to eat his crowdy without a bicker: and many a high head has been brought full low among us in as short a space. Scott of Scotstarvet's *Staggering State of Scots Statesmen*, of which curious memoir you showed me a manuscript, has been outstaggered in our time.'

The Lord Keeper answered with a deep sigh, 'That these mutations were no new sights in Scotland, and had been witnessed long before the time of the satirical author he had quoted. It was many a long year,' he said, 'since Fordun had quoted as an ancient proverb, "*Neque dives, neque fortis, sed nec sapiens Scotus, pra dominante invidia, diu durabit in terra.*"'

'And be assured, my esteemed friend,' was the answer, 'that even your long services to the state, or deep legal knowledge, will not save you, or render your estate stable, if the Marquis of A—— comes in with a party in the British Parliament. You know that the deceased Lord Ravenswood was his near ally, his lady being fifth in descent from the Knight of Tillibardine; and I am well assured that he will take young Ravenswood by the hand, and be his very good lord and kinsman. Why should he not? The Master is an active and stirring young fellow, able to help himself with tongue and hands; and it is such as he that finds friends among their kindred, and not those unarmed and unable Mephibosheths that are sure to be a burden to every one that takes them up. And so, if these Ravenswood cases be called over the coals in the House of Peers, you will find that the Marquis will have a crow to pluck with you.'

'That would be an evil requital,' said the Lord Keeper, 'for my long services to the state, and the ancient respect in which I have held his lordship's honourable family and person.'

'Ay, but,' rejoined the agent of the Marquis, 'it is in vain to look back on past service and auld respect, my lord; it will be present service and immediate proofs of regard which, in these sliddery times, will be expected by a man like the Marquis.'

The Lord Keeper now saw the full drift of his friend's argument, but he was too cautious to return any positive answer.

'He knew not,' he said, 'the service which the Lord Marquis could expect from one of his limited abilities, that had not

always stood at his command, still saving and reserving his duty to his king and country.'

Having thus said nothing, while he seemed to say everything, for the exception was calculated to cover whatever he might afterwards think proper to bring under it, Sir William Ashton changed the conversation, nor did he again permit the same topic to be introduced. His guest departed, without having brought the wily old statesman the length of committing himself, or of pledging himself to any future line of conduct, but with the certainty that he had alarmed his fears in a most sensible point, and laid a foundation for future and farther treaty.

When he rendered an account of his negotiation to the Marquis, they both agreed that the Keeper ought not to be permitted to relapse into security, and that he should be plied with new subjects of alarm, especially during the absence of his lady. They were well aware that her proud, vindictive, and predominating spirit would be likely to supply him with the courage in which he was deficient: that she was immovably attached to the party now in power, with whom she maintained a close correspondence and alliance: and that she hated, without fearing, the Ravenswood family (whose more ancient dignity threw discredit on the newly-acquired grandeur of her husband) to such a degree, that she would have perilled the interest of her own house to have the prospect of altogether crushing that of her enemy.

But Lady Ashton was now absent. The business which had long detained her in Edinburgh had afterwards induced her to travel to London, not without the hope that she might contribute her share to disconcert the intrigues of the Marquis at court; for she stood high in favour with the celebrated Sarah Duchess of Marlborough, to whom, in point of character, she bore considerable resemblance. It was necessary to press her husband hard before her return; and, as a preparatory step, the Marquis wrote to the Master of Ravenswood the letter which we rehearsed in a former chapter. It was cautiously worded, so as to leave it in the power of the writer hereafter to take as deep or as slight an interest in the fortunes of his kinsman as the progress of his own schemes might require. But however unwilling, as a statesman, the Marquis might be to commit himself, or assume the character of a patron, while he had nothing to give away, it must be said to his he that he felt a strong inclination effectually to befriend

Master of Ravenswood, as well as to use his name as a means of alarming the terrors of the Lord Keeper.

As the messenger who carried this letter was to pass near the house of the Lord Keeper, he had it in direction that, in the village adjoining to the park-gate of the castle, his horse should lose a shoe, and that, while it was replaced by the smith of the place, he should express the utmost regret for the necessary loss of time, and in the vehemence of his impatience give it to be understood that he was bearing a message from the Marquis of A—— to the Master of Ravenswood upon a matter of life and death.

This news, with exaggerations, was speedily carried from various quarters to the ears of the Lord Keeper, and each reporter dwelt upon the extreme impatience of the courier, and the surprising short time in which he had executed his journey. The anxious statesman heard in silence; but in private Lockhard received orders to watch the courier on his return, to waylay him in the village, to ply him with liquor, if possible, and to use all means, fair or foul, to learn the contents of the letter of which he was the bearer. But as this plot had been foreseen, the messenger returned by a different and distant road, and thus escaped the snare that was laid for him.

After he had been in vain expected for some time, Mr. Dingwall had orders to make especial inquiry among his clients of Wolf's Hope, whether such a domestic belonging to the Marquis of A—— had actually arrived at the neighbouring castle. This was easily ascertained, for Caleb had been in the village one morning by five o'clock, to borrow 'twa chappins of ale and a kipper' for the messenger's refreshment, and the poor fellow had been ill for twenty-four hours at Luckie Sma'-trash's, in consequence of dining upon 'saut saumon and sour drink.' So that the existence of a correspondence betwixt the Marquis and his distressed kinsman, which Sir William Ashton had sometimes treated as a bugbear, was proved beyond the possibility of further doubt.

The alarm of the Lord Keeper became very serious; since the Claim of Right, the power of appealing from the decisions of the civil court to the Estates of Parliament, which had formerly been held incompetent, had in many instances been claimed, and in some allowed, and he had no small reason to apprehend the issue, if the English House of Lords should be disposed to act upon an appeal from the Master of Ravenswood 'for remeid in law.' It would resolve into an equitable claim,

and be decided, perhaps, upon the broad principles of , which were not quite so favourable to the Lord Keeper as those of strict law. Besides, judging, though most inaccurately, from courts which he had himself known in the unhappy times preceding the Scottish Union, the Keeper might have too much right to think that, in the House to which his lawsuits were to be transferred, the old maxim might prevail in Scotland which was too well recognised in former times – 'Show me the man, and I'll show you the law.' The high and unbiassed character of English judicial proceedings was then little known in Scotland, and the extension of them to that country was one of the most valuable advantages which it gained by the Union. But this was a blessing which the Lord Keeper, who had lived under another system, could not have the means of foreseeing. In the loss of his political consequence, he anticipated the loss of his lawsuit. Meanwhile, every report which reached him served to render the success of the Marquis's intrigues the more probable, and the Lord Keeper began to think it indispensable that he should look round for some kind of protection against the coming storm. The timidity of his temper induced him to adopt measures of compromise and conciliation. The affair of the wild bull, properly managed, might, he thought, be made to facilitate a personal communication and reconciliation betwixt the Master and himself. He would then learn, if possible, what his own ideas were of the extent of his rights, and the means of enforcing them; and perhaps matters might be brought to a compromise, where one party was wealthy and the other so very poor. A reconciliation with Ravenswood was likely to give him an opportunity to play his own game with the Marquis of A——. 'And besides,' said he to himself, 'it will be an act of generosity to raise up the heir of this distressed family; and if he is to be warmly and effectually befriended by the new government, who knows but my virtue may prove its own reward?'

Thus thought Sir William Ashton, covering with no unusual self-delusion his interested views with a hue of virtue; and having attained this point, his fancy strayed still further. He began to bethink himself, 'That if Ravenswood was to have a distinguished place of power and trust, and if such a union should sopite the heavier part of his unadjusted claims, there might be worse matches for his daughter Lucy: the Master might be reponed against the attainder. Lord Ravenswood was an ancient title, and the alliance would, in some measure,

legitimate his own possession of the greater part of the Master's spoils, and make the surrender of the rest a subject of less bitter regret.'

With these mingled and multifarious plans occupying his head, the Lord Keeper availed himself of my Lord Bittlebrains' repeated invitation to his residence, and thus came within a very few miles of Wolf's Crag. Here he found the lord of the mansion absent, but was courteously received by the lady, who expected her husband's immediate return. She expressed her particular delight at seeing Miss Ashton, and appointed the hounds to be taken out for the Lord Keeper's special amusement. He readily entered into the proposal, as giving him an opportunity to reconnoitre Wolf's Crag, and perhaps to make some acquaintance with the owner, if he should be tempted from his desolate mansion by the chase. Lockhard had his orders to endeavour on his part to make some acquaintance with the inmates of the castle, and we have seen how he played his part.

The accidental storm did more to further the Lord Keeper's plan of forming a personal acquaintance with young Ravenswood than his most sanguine expectations could have anticipated. His fear of the young nobleman's personal resentment had greatly decreased since he considered him as formidable from his legal claims and the means he might have of enforcing them. But although he thought, not unreasonably, that only desperate circumstances drove men on desperate measures, it [illegible] without a secret terror, which shook his heart within [illegible] he first felt himself inclosed within the desolate tower of Wolf's Crag; a place so well fitted, from solitude and strength, to be a scene of violence and vengeance. The stern reception at first given to them by the Master of Ravenswood, and the difficulty he felt in explaining to that injured nobleman what guests were under the shelter of his roof, did not soothe these alarms; so that when Sir William Ashton heard the door of the courtyard shut behind him with violence, the words of Alice rung in his ears, 'That he had drawn on matters too hardly with so fierce a race as those of Ravenswood, and that they would bide their time to be avenged.'

The subsequent frankness of the Master's hospitality, as their acquaintance increased, abated the apprehensions these recollections were calculated to excite; and it did not escape Sir William Ashton, that it was to Lucy's grace and beauty he owed the change in their host's behaviour.

All these thoughts thronged upon him when he took possession of the secret chamber. The iron lamp, the unfurnished apartment, more resembling a prison than a place of ordinary repose, the hoarse and ceaseless sound of the waves rushing against the base of the rock on which the castle was founded, saddened and perplexed his mind. To his own successful machinations, the ruin of the family had been in a great measure owing, but his disposition was crafty, and not cruel; so that actually to witness the desolation and distress he had himself occasioned was as painful to him as it would be to the humane mistress of a family to superintend in person the execution of the lambs and poultry which are killed by her own directions. At the same time, when he thought of the alternative of restoring to Ravenswood a large proportion of his spoils, or of adopting, as an ally and member of his own family, the heir of this impoverished house, he felt as the spider may be supposed to do when his whole web, the intricacies of which had been planned with so much art, is destroyed by the chance sweep of a broom. And then, if he should commit himself too far in this matter, it gave rise to a perilous question, which many a good husband, when under temptation to act as a free agent, has asked himself without being able to return a satisfactory answer — 'What will my wife — what will Lady Ashton say?' On the whole, he came at length to the resolution in which minds of a weaker cast so often take refuge. He resolved to watch events, to take advantage of circumstances as they occurred, and regulate his conduct accordingly. In this spirit of temporising policy, he at length composed his mind to rest.

CHAPTER XVI

A slight note I have about me for you, for the delivery of which you must excuse me. It is an offer that friendship calls upon me to do, and no way offensive to you, since I desire nothing but right upon both sides.

King and no King.

WHEN Ravenswood and his guest met in the morning, the gloom of the Master's spirit had in part returned. He, also, had passed a night rather of reflection than of slumber; and the feelings which he could not but entertain towards Lucy Ashton had to support a severe conflict against those which he had so long nourished against her father. To clasp in friendship the hand of the enemy of his house, to entertain him under his roof, to exchange with him the courtesies and the kindness of domestic familiarity, was a degradation which his proud spirit could not be bent to without a struggle.

But the ice being once broken, the Lord Keeper was resolved it should not have time again to freeze. It had been part of his plan to stun and confuse Ravenswood's ideas, by a complicated and technical statement of the matters which had been in debate betwixt their families, justly thinking that it would be difficult for a youth of his age to follow the expositions of a practical lawyer, concerning actions of comp[illegible] and reckoning, and of multiplepoindings, and adjudications and wadsets, proper and improper, and poindings of the ground, and declarations of the expiry of the legal. 'Thus,' thought Sir William, 'I shall have all the grace of appearing perfectly communicative, while my party will derive very little advantage from anything I may tell him.' He therefore took Ravenswood aside into the deep recess of a window in the hall, and resuming the discourse of the preceding evening, expressed a hope that his young friend would assume some patience, in order to hear him enter into a minute and explanatory detail of those unfortunate circumstances in which his late honourable father had stood at variance with the Lord Keeper. The Master of Ravenswood coloured

highly, but was silent; and the Lord Keeper, though not greatly approving the sudden heightening of his auditor's complexion, commenced the history of a bond for twenty thousand marks, advanced by his father to the father of Allan Lord Ravenswood, and was proceeding to detail the executorial proceedings by which this large sum had been rendered a *debitum fundi*, when he was interrupted by the Master.

'It is not in this place,' he said, 'that I can hear Sir William Ashton's explanation of the matters in question between us. It is not here, where my father died of a broken heart, that I can with decency or temper investigate the cause of his distress. I might remember that I was a son, and forget the duties of a host. A time, however, there must come, when these things shall be discussed in a place and in a presence where both of us will have equal freedom to speak and to hear.'

'Any time,' the Lord Keeper said, 'any place, was alike to those who sought nothing but justice. Yet it would seem he was, in fairness, entitled to some premonition respecting the grounds upon which the Master proposed to impugn the whole train of legal proceedings, which had been so well and ripely advised in the only courts competent.'

'Sir William Ashton,' answered the Master, with warmth, 'the lands which you now occupy were granted to my remote ancestor for services done with his sword against the English invaders. How they have glided from us by a train of proceedings that seemed to be neither sale, nor mortgage, nor adjudication for debt, but a nondescript and entangled mixture of all these rights; how annual rent has been accumulated upon principal, and no nook or coign of legal advantage left unoccupied, until our interest in our hereditary property seems to have melted away like an icicle in thaw — all this you understand better than I do. I am willing, however, to suppose, from the frankness of your conduct towards me, that I may in a great measure have mistaken your personal character, and that things may have appeared right and fitting to you, a skilful and practised lawyer, which to my ignorant understanding seem very little short of injustice and gross oppression.'

'And you, my dear Master,' answered Sir William 'you, permit me to say, have been equally misrepresented to me. I was taught to believe you a fierce, imperious, hot-headed youth, ready, at the slighest provocation, to throw your sword into the scales of justice, and to appeal to those rude and forcible measures from which civil polity has long protected the people

of Scotland. Then, since we were mutually mistaken in each other, why should not the young nobleman be willing to listen to the old lawyer, while, at least, he explains the points of difference betwixt them?'

'No, my lord,' answered Ravenswood; 'it is in the House of British Peers,[1] whose honour must be equal to their rank it is in the court of last resort that we must parley together. The belted lords of Britain, her ancient peers, must decide, if it is their will that a house, not the least noble of their members, shall be stripped of their possessions, the reward of the patriotism of generations, as the pawn of a wretched mechanic becomes forfeit to the usurer the instant the hour of redemption has passed away. If they yield to the grasping severity of the creditor, and to the gnawing usury that eats into our lands as moths into a raiment, it will be of more evil consequence to them and their posterity than to [illegible] Ravenswood. I shall still have my sword and my cloak [illegible] to follow the profession of arms wherever a trumpet shall

As he pronounced these words [illegible] in yet melancholy tone, he raised his eyes, and suddenly encountered those of Lucy Ashton, who had stolen unperceived into the interview, and observed her looks fastened on [illegible] with an expression of enthusiastic interest and admiration which had wrapt her for a moment beyond the fear of discovery. The noble form and fine features of Ravenswood, fired with the pride of birth and sense of internal dignity, the mellow and expressive tones of his voice, the desolate state of his fortunes, and the indifference with which he seemed to endure and to despise the worst that might befall, rendered him a dangerous object of contemplation for a maiden already too much disposed to dwell upon recollections connected with him. When their eyes encountered each other, both blushed deeply, conscious [illegible] ing internal emotion, and shunned again to meet [illegible]

Sir William Ashton had [illegible] watched the expression of their countenances. 'I am fairly,' said he internally, 'neither Parliament nor [illegible]ation: I have an effectual mode of reconciling myself [illegible] hot-tempered young fellow, in case he shall become troublesome. The present object is, at all events, to avoid [illegible] ourselves. The hook is fixed: we will not strain the [illegible]: it is as well to reserve the privilege of slipping it [illegible] if we *do* not find the fish worth landing.'

[1] See Appeal to Parliament. Note 7.

In this selfish and cruel calculation upon the supposed attachment of Ravenswood to Lucy, he was so far from considering the pain he might give to the former, by thus dallying with his affections, that he even did not think upon the risk of involving his own daughter in the perils of an unfortunate passion; as if her predilection, which could not escape his attention, were like the flame of a taper, which might be lighted or extinguished at pleasure. But Providence had prepared a dreadful requital for this keen observer of human passions, who had spent his life in securing advantages to himself by artfully working upon the passions of others.

Caleb Balderstone now came to announce that breakfast was prepared; for in those days of substantial feeding, the relics of the supper amply furnished forth the morning meal. Neither did he forget to present to the Lord Keeper, with great reverence, a morning draught in a large pewter cup, garnished with leaves of parsley and scurvy-grass. He craved pardon, of course, for having omitted to serve it in the great silver standing cup as behoved, being that it was at present in a silversmith's in Edinburgh, for the purpose of being overlaid with gilt.

'In Edinburgh like enough,' said Ravenswood; 'but in what place, or for what purpose, I am afraid neither you nor I know.'

'Aweel!' said Caleb, peevishly, 'there 's a man standing at the gate already this morning — that 's nae thing that I ken. Does your honour ken whether ye will speak wi' him or no?

'Does he wish to speak with me, Caleb?'

'Less will not serve him,' said Caleb; 'but ye had best take a visie of him through the wicket before opening the gate; it 's no every ane we suld let into this castle.'

'What! do you suppose him to be a messenger come to arrest me for debt?' said Ravenswood.

'A messenger arrest your honour for debt, and in your Castle of Wolf's Crag! Your honour is jesting wi' auld Caleb this morning.' However, he whispered in his ear, as he followed him out, 'I would be loth to do ony decent man a prejudice in your honour's gude opinion; but I would tak twa looks o that chield before I let him within these walls.'

He was not an officer of the law, however; being no less a person than Captain Craigengelt, with his nose as red as a comfortable cup of brandy could make it, his laced cocked hat set a little aside upon the top of his black riding periwig, a sword by his side and pistols at his holsters, and his person

arrayed in a . ding suit, laid over with tarnished lace the very moral of one who would say, '8 and to a true man.'

When the Master had recognised him, he ordered the gates to be opened. 'I suppose,' he said, 'Captain Craigengelt, there are no such weighty matters betwixt you and me, but may be discussed in this place. I have company in the castle at present, and the terms upon which we last parted must excuse my asking you to make part of them.'

Craigengelt, although possessing the very perfection of impudence, was somewhat abashed by this unfavourable reception. 'He had no intention,' he said, 'to force himself upon the Master of Ravenswood's hospitality; he was in the honourable service of bearing a message to him from a friend, otherwise the Master of Ravenswood should not have had reason to complain of this intrusion.'

'Let it be short, sir,' said the Master, 'for that will be the best apology. Who is the gentleman who is so fortunate as to have your services as a messenger?'

'My friend, Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw,' answered Craigengelt, with conscious importance, and that confidence which the acknowledged courage of his principle inspired, 'who conceives himself to have been treated by you with something much short of the respect which he had reason to demand, and therefore is resolved to exact satisfaction. I bring with me,' said he, taking a piece of paper out of his pocket, 'the precise length of his sword; and he requests you will meet him, accompanied by a friend, and equally armed, at any place within a mile of the castle, when I shall give attendance as umpire, or second, on his behoof.'

'Satisfaction! and equal arms!' repeated Ravenswood, who, the reader will recollect, had no reason to suppose he had given the slightest offence to his late inmate: 'upon my word, Captain Craigengelt, either you have invented the most improbable falsehood that ever came into the mind of such a person, or your morning draught has been somewhat of the strongest. What could persuade Bucklaw to send me such a message?'

'For that, sir,' replied Craigengelt, 'I am desired to refer you to what, in duty to my friend, I am to term your inhospitality in excluding him from your house, without reasons assigned.'

'It is impossible,' replied the Master: 'he cannot be such a fool as to interpret actual necessity as an insult. Nor do I believe that, knowing my opinion of you, Captain, he would

have employed the services of so slight and inconsiderable a person as yourself upon such an errand, as I certainly could expect no man of honour to act with you in the office of umpire.'

'I slight and inconsiderable!' said Craigengelt, raising his voice, and laying his hand on his cutlass; 'if it were not that the quarrel of my friend craves the precedence, and is in dependence before my own, I would give you to understand ——'

'I can understand nothing upon your explanation, Captain Craigengelt. Be satisfied of that, and oblige me with your departure.'

'D——n!' muttered the bully; 'and is this the answer which I am to carry back to an honourable message?'

'Tell the Laird of Bucklaw,' answered Ravenswood, 'if you are really sent by him, that, when he sends me his cause of grievance by a person fitting to carry such an errand betwixt him and me, I will either explain it or maintain it.'

'Then, Master, you will at least cause to be returned to Hayston, by my hands, his property which is remaining in your possession.'

'Whatever property Bucklaw may have left behind him, sir,' replied the Master, 'shall be returned to him by my servant, as you do not show me any credentials from him which entitle you to receive it.'

'Well, Master,' said Captain Craigengelt, with malice which even his fear of the consequences could not suppress, 'you have this morning done me an egregious wrong and dishonour, but far more to yourself. A castle indeed!' he continued, looking around him; 'why, this is worse than a *coupe-gorge* house, where they receive travellers to plunder them of their property.'

'You insolent rascal,' said the Master, raising his cane, and making a grasp at the Captain's bridle, 'if you do not depart without uttering another syllable, I will batoon you to death!'

At the motion of the Master towards him, the bully turned so rapidly round, that with some difficulty he escaped throwing down his horse, whose hoofs struck fire from the rocky pavement in every direction. Recovering him, however, with the bridle, he pushed for the gate, and rode sharply back again in the direction of the village.

As Ravenswood turned round to leave the courtyard after this dialogue, he found that the Lord Keeper had descended from the hall, and witnessed, though at a distance prescribed by politeness, his interview with Craigengelt.

'I have seen,' said the Lord Keeper, 'that gentleman's face.

and at no great distance of time; his name is Craig — Craig — something, is it not?'

'Craigengelt is the fellow's name,' said the Master, 'at least that by which he passes at present.'

'Craig-in-guilt,' said Caleb, punning upon the word 'craig,' which in Scotch signifies throat; 'if he is Craig-in-guilt just now, he is as likely to be Craig-in-peril as ony chield I ever saw; the loon has woodie written on his very visnomy, and I wad wager twa and a plack that hemp plaits his cravat yet.'

'You understand physiognomy, good Mr. Caleb,' said the Keeper, smiling; 'I assure you the gentleman has been near such a consummation before now; for I most distinctly recollect that, upon occasion of a journey which I made about a fortnight ago to Edinburgh, I saw Mr. Craigengelt, or whatever is his name, undergo a severe examination before the privy council.'

'Upon what account?' said the Master of Ravenswood, with some interest.

The question led immediately to a tale which the Lord Keeper had been very anxious to introduce, when he could find a graceful and fitting opportunity. He took hold of the Master's arm and led him back towards the hall. 'The answer to your question,' he said, 'though it is a ridiculous business, is only fit for your own ear.'

As they entered the hall, he again took the Master apart into one of the recesses of the window, where it will be easily believed that Miss Ashton did not venture again to intrude upon their conference.

CHAPTER XVII

Here is a father now,
Will truck his daughter for a foreign venture,
Make her the stop-gap to some canker'd feud,
Or fling her o'er, like Jonah, to the fishes,
To appease the sea at highest.

Anonymous.

THE Lord Keeper opened his discourse with an appearance of unconcern, marking, however, very carefully, the effect of his communication upon young Ravenswood. 'You are aware,' he said, 'my young friend, that suspicion is the natural vice of our unsettled times, and exposes the best and wisest of us to the imposition of artful rascals. If I had been disposed to listen to such the other day, or even if I had been the wily politician which you have been taught to believe me, you, Master of Ravenswood, instead of being at freedom, and with full liberty to solicit and act against me as you please, in defence of what you suppose to be your rights, would have been in the Castle of Edinburgh, or some other state prison; or, if you had escaped that destiny, it must have been by flight to a foreign country, and at the risk of a sentence of fugitation.'

'My Lord Keeper,' said the Master, 'I think you would not jest on such a subject; yet it seems impossible you can be in earnest.'

'Innocence,' said the Lord Keeper, 'is also confident, and sometimes, though very excusably, presumptuously so.'

'I do not understand,' said Ravenswood, 'how a consciousness of innocence can be, in any case, accounted presumptuous.'

'Imprudent, at least, it may be called,' said Sir William Ashton, 'since it is apt to lead us into the mistake of supposing that sufficiently evident to others of which, in fact, we are only conscious ourselves. I have known a rogue, for this very reason, make a better defence than an innocent man could have done in the same circumstances of suspicion. Having no consciousness

of innocence to support him, such a fellow applies himself to all the advantages which the law will afford him, and sometimes — if his counsel be men of talent — succeeds in compelling his judges to receive him as innocent. I remember the celebrated case of Sir Coolie Condiddle of Condiddle, who was tried for theft under trust, of which all the world knew him guilty, and yet was not only acquitted, but lived to sit in judgment on honester folk.'

'Allow me to beg you will return to the point,' said the Master; 'you seemed to say that I had suffered under some suspicion.'

'Suspicion, Master! Ay, truly, and I can show you the proofs of it; if I happen only to have them with me. Here, Lockhard.' His attendant came. 'Fetch me the little private mail with the padlocks, that I recommended to your particular charge, d' ye hear?'

'Yes, my lord.' Lockhard vanished; and the Keeper continued, as if half speaking to himself.

'I think the papers are with me — I think so, for, as I was to be in this country, it was natural for me to bring them with me. I have them, however, at Ravenswood Castle, that I am sure of; so perhaps you might condescend ——'

Here Lockhard entered, and put the leathern scrutoire, or mail-box, into his hands. The Keeper produced one or two papers, respecting the information laid before the privy council concerning the riot, as it was termed, at the funeral of Allan Lord Ravenswood, and the active share he had himself taken in quashing the proceedings against the Master. These documents had been selected with care, so as to irritate the natural curiosity of Ravenswood upon such a subject, without gratifying it, yet to show that Sir William Ashton had acted upon that trying occasion the part of an advocate and peacemaker betwixt him and the jealous authorities of the day. Having furnished his host with such subjects for examination, the Lord Keeper went to the breakfast-table, and entered into light conversation, addressed partly to old Caleb, whose resentment against the usurper of the Castle of Ravenswood began to be softened by his familiarity, and partly to his daughter.

After perusing these papers, the Master of Ravenswood remained for a minute or two with his hand pressed against his brow, in deep and profound meditation. He then again cast his eye hastily over the papers, as if desirous of discovering in them some deep purpose, or some mark of fabrication, which

had escaped him at first perusal. Apparently the second reading confirmed the opinion which had pressed upon him at the first, for he started from the stone bench on which he was sitting, and, going to the Lord Keeper, took his hand, and, strongly pressing it, asked his pardon repeatedly for the injustice he had done him, when it appeared he was experiencing, at his hands, the benefit of protection to his person and vindication to his character.

The statesman received these acknowledgments at first with well-feigned surprise and then with an affectation of frank cordiality. The tears began already to start from Lucy's blue eyes at viewing this unexpected and moving scene. To see the Master, late so haughty and reserved, and whom she had always supposed the injured person, supplicating her father for forgiveness, was a change at once surprising, flattering, and affecting.

'Dry your eyes, Lucy,' said her father; 'why should you weep, because your father, though a lawyer, is discovered to be a fair and honourable man? What have you to thank me for, my dear Master,' he continued, addressing Ravenswood, 'that you would not have done in my case? "*Suum cuique tribuito*," was the Roman justice, and I learned it when I studied Justinian. Besides, have you not overpaid me a thousand times, in saving the life of this dear child?'

'Yes,' answered the Master, in all the remorse of self-accusation; 'but the little service *I* did was an act of mere brutal instinct; *your* defence of my cause, when you knew how ill I thought of you, and how much I was disposed to be your enemy, was an act of generous, manly, and considerate wisdom.'

'Pshaw!' said the Lord Keeper, 'each of us acted in his own way; you as a gallant soldier, I as an upright judge and privy-councillor. We could not, perhaps, have changed parts—at least I should have made a very sorry tauridor, and you, my good Master, though your cause is so excellent, might have pleaded it perhaps worse yourself than I who acted for you before the council.'

'My generous friend!' said Ravenswood; and with that brief word, which the Keeper had often lavished upon him, but which he himself now pronounced for the first time, he gave to his feudal enemy the full confidence of a haughty but honourable heart. The Master had been remarked among his contemporaries for sense and acuteness, as well as for his

reserved, pertinacious, and irascible character. His prepossessions accordingly, however obstinate, were of a nature to give way before love and gratitude; and the real charms of the daughter, joined to the supposed services of the father, cancelled in his memory the vows of vengeance which he had taken so deeply on the eve of his father's funeral. But they had been heard and registered in the book of fate.

Caleb was present at this extraordinary scene, and he could conceive no other reason for a proceeding so extraordinary than an alliance betwixt the houses, and Ravenswood Castle assigned for the young lady's dowry. As for Lucy, when Ravenswood uttered the most passionate excuses for his ungrateful negligence, she could but smile through her tears, and, as she abandoned her hand to him, assure him, in broken accents, of the delight with which she beheld the complete reconciliation between her father and her deliverer. Even the statesman was moved and affected by the fiery, unreserved, and generous self-abandonment with which the Master of Ravenswood renounced his feudal enmity, and threw himself without hesitation upon his forgiveness. His eyes glistened as he looked upon a couple who were obviously becoming attached, and who seemed made for each other. He thought how high the proud and chivalrous character of Ravenswood might rise under many circumstances in which *he* found himself 'overcrowed,' to use a phrase of Spenser and kept under, by his brief pedigree, and timidity, or disposition. Then his daughter—his favourite child—his constant playmate—seemed formed to live happy in a union with such a commanding spirit as Ravenswood; and even the fine, delicate, fragile form of Lucy Ashton seemed to require the support of the Master's muscular strength and masculine character. And it was not merely during a few minutes that Sir William Ashton looked upon their marriage as a probable and even desirable event, for a full hour intervened ere his imagination was crossed by recollection of the Master's poverty, and the sure displeasure of Lady Ashton. It is certain, that the very unusual flow of kindly feeling with which the Lord Keeper had been thus surprised, was one of the circumstances which gave much tacit encouragement to the attachment between the Master and his daughter, and led both the lovers distinctly to believe that it was a connexion which would be most agreeable to him. He himself was supposed to have admitted this in effect, when, long after the catastrophe of their love, he used to warn

his hearers against permitting their feelings to obtain a ascendency over their judgment, and affirm, that the greatest misfortune of his life was owing to a very temporary predominance of sensibility over self-interest. It must be owned, if such was the case, he was long and severely punished for an offence of very brief duration.

After some pause, the Lord Keeper resumed the conversation. —'In your surprise at finding me an honester man than you expected, you have lost your curiosity about this Craigengelt, my good Master: and yet your name was brought in, in the course of that matter too.'

'The scoundrel!' said Ravenswood. 'My connexion with him was of the most temporary nature possible; and yet I was very foolish to hold any communication with him at all. What did he say of me?'

'Enough,' said the Keeper, 'to excite the very loyal terrors of some of our sages, who are for proceeding against men on the mere grounds of suspicion or mercenary information. Some nonsense about your proposing to enter into the service of France, or the Pretender, I don't recollect which, but which the Marquis of A——, one of your best friends, and another person, whom some call one of your worst and most interested enemies, could not, somehow, be brought to listen to.'

'I am obliged to my honourable friend; and yet,' shaking the Lord Keeper's hand—'and yet I am still more obliged to my honourable enemy.'

'*Inimicus amicissimus*,' said the Lord Keeper, returning the pressure; 'but this gentleman — this Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw — I am afraid the poor young man — I heard the fellow mention his name — is under very bad guidance.'

'He is old enough to govern himself,' answered the Master.

'Old enough, perhaps, but scarce wise enough, if he has chosen this fellow for his *fidus Achates*. Why, he lodged an information against him — that is, such a consequence might have ensued from his examination, had we not looked rather at the character of the witness than the tenor of his evidence.'

'Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw,' said the Master, 'is, I believe, a most honourable man, and capable of nothing that is mean or disgraceful.'

'Capable of much that is unreasonable, though; that you must needs allow, Master. Death will soon put him in possession of a fair estate, if he hath it not already; old Lady

Girnington — an excellent person, excepting that her inveterate ill-nature rendered her intolerable to the whole world — is probably dead by this time. Six heirs portioners have successively died to make her wealthy. I know the estates well; they march[1] with my own — a noble property.'

'I am glad of it,' said Ravenswood, 'and should be more so, were I confident that Bucklaw would change his company and habits with his fortunes. This appearance of Craigengelt, acting in the capacity of his friend, is a most vile augury for his future respectability.'

'He is a bird of evil omen, to be sure,' said the keeper, 'and croaks of jails and gallows-tree. But I see Mr. Caleb grows impatient for our return to breakfast.'

[1] *i. e.*, They are bounded by my own.

CHAPTER XVIII

Sir, stay at home and take an old man's counsel ;
Seek not to bask you by a stranger's hearth ;
Our own blue smoke is warmer than their fire.
Domestic food is wholesome, though 't is homely,
And foreign dainties poisonous, though tasteful.

The French Courtezan.

THE Master of Ravenswood took an opportunity to leave his guests to prepare for their departure, while he himself made the brief arrangements necessary previous to his absence from Wolf's Crag for a day or two. It was necessary to communicate with Caleb on this occasion, and he found that faithful servitor in his sooty and ruinous den, greatly delighted with the departure of their visitors, and computing how long, with good management, the provisions which had been unexpended might furnish forth the Master's table. 'He 's nae belly god, that 's ae blessing ; and Bucklaw's gane, that could have eaten a horse behind the saddle. Crosses or water-purpie, and a bit ait-cake, can serve the Master for breakfast as weel as Caleb. Then for dinner — there 's no muckle left on the spule-bane ; it will brander, though it will brander[1] very well.'

His triumphant calculations were interrupted by the Master, who communicated to him, not without some hesitation, his purpose to ride with the Lord Keeper as far as Ravenswood Castle, and to remain there for a day or two.

'The mercy of Heaven forbid!' said the old serving man, turning as pale as the table-cloth which he was folding up.

'And why, Caleb?' said his master — 'why should the mercy of Heaven forbid my returning the Lord Keeper's visit?'

'Oh, sir!' replied Caleb — 'O, Mr. Edgar! I am your servant, and it ill becomes me to speak ; but I am an auld servant — have served baith your father and gudesire, and mind to have seen Lord Randal, your great-grandfather, but that was when I was a bairn.'

[1] Broil.

'And what of all this, Balderstone?' said the Master; 'what can it possibly have to do with my paying some ordinary civility to a neighbour?'

'O, Mr. Edgar, — that is, my lord!' answered the butler, 'your ain conscience tells you it isna for your father's son to be neighbouring wi' the like o' him; it isna for the credit of the family. An he were ance come to terms, and to gie ye back your ain, e'en though ye suld honour his house wi' your alliance, I suldna say na; for the young leddy is a winsome sweet creature. But keep your ain state wi' them — I ken the race o' them weel — they will think the mair o' ye.'

'Why, now, you go farther than I do, Caleb,' said the Master, drowning a certain degree of consciousness in a forced laugh; 'you are for marrying me into a family that you will not allow me to visit, how's this? and you look as pale as death besides.'

'O, sir,' repeated Caleb again, 'you would but laugh if I tauld it; but Thomas the Rhymer, whose tongue couldna be false, spoke the word of your house that will e'en prove ower true if you go to Ravenswood this day. O, that it should e'er have been fulfilled in my time!'

'And what is it, Caleb?' said Ravenswood, wishing to soothe the fears of his old servant.

Caleb replied, 'He had never repeated the lines to living mortal; they were told to him by an auld priest that had been confessor to Lord Allan's father when the family were Catholic. But mony a time,' he said, 'I hae soughed thae dark words ower to mysell, and, well a day! little did I think of their coming round this day.'

'Truce with your nonsense, and let me hear the doggerel which has put it into your head,' said the Master, impatiently.

With a quivering voice, and a cheek pale with apprehension, Caleb faltered out the following lines:

> 'When the last Laird of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride,
> And woo a dead maiden to be his bride,
> He shall stable his steed in the Kelpie's flow,
> And his name shall be lost for evermoe!'

'I know the Kelpie's flow well enough,' said the Master; 'I suppose, at least, you mean the quicksand betwixt this tower and Wolf's Hope; but why any man in his senses should stable a steed there ——'

'O, never speer ony thing about that, sir — God forbid we should ken what the prophecy means — but just bide you at

hame, and let the strangers ride to Ravenswood by themselves. We have done eneugh for them; and to do mair would be mair against the credit of the family than in its favour.'

'Well, Caleb,' said the Master, 'I give you the best possible credit for your good advice on this occasion; but as I do not go to Ravenswood to seek a bride, dead or alive, I hope I shall choose a better stable for my horse than the Kelpie's quicksand, and especially as I have always had a particular dread of it since the patrol of dragoons were lost there ten years since. My father and I saw them from the tower struggling against the advancing tide, and they were lost long before any help could reach them.'

'And they deserved it weel, the southern loons!' said Caleb; 'what had they ado capering on our sands, and hindering a wheen honest folk frae bringing on shore a drap brandy? I hae seen them that busy, that I wad hae fired the auld culverin or the demi-saker that 's on the south bartizan at them, only I was feared they might burst in the ganging aff.'

Caleb's brain was now fully engaged with abuse of the English soldiery and excisemen, so that his master found no great difficulty in escaping from him and rejoining his guests. All was now ready for their departure; and one of the Lord Keeper's grooms having saddled the Master's steed, they mounted in the courtyard.

Caleb had, with much toil, opened the double doors of the outward gate, and thereat stationed himself, endeavouring, by the reverential, and at the same time consequential, air which he assumed, to supply, by his own gaunt, wasted, and thin person, the absence of a whole baronial establishment of porters, warders, and liveried menials.

The Keeper returned his deep reverence with a cordial farewell, stooping at the same time from his horse, and sliding into the butler's hand the remuneration which in those days was always given by a departing guest to the domestics of the family where he had been entertained. Lucy smiled on the old man with her usual sweetness, bade him adieu, and deposited her guerdon with a grace of action and a gentleness of accent which could not have failed to have won the faithful retainer's heart, but for Thomas the Rhymer, and the successful lawsuit against his master. As it was, he might have adopted the language of the Duke in *As You Like It*

> Thou wouldst have better pleased me with this deed,
> If thou hadst told me of another father.

Ravenswood was at the lady's bridle rein, encouraging her timidity, and guiding her horse carefully down the rocky path which led to the moor, when one of the servants announced from the rear that Caleb was calling loudly after them, desiring to speak with his master. Ravenswood felt it would look singular to neglect this summons, although inwardly cursing Caleb for his impertinent officiousness; therefore he was compelled to relinquish to Mr. Lockhard the agreeable duty in which he was engaged, and to ride back to the gate of the courtyard. Here he was beginning, somewhat peevishly, to ask Caleb the cause of his clamour, when the good old man exclaimed, 'Whisht, sir! — whisht, and let me speak just ae word that I couldna say afore folk: there (putting into his lord's hand the money he had just received) — there's three gowd pieces; and ye'll want siller up-bye yonder. But stay, whisht now!' for the Master was beginning to exclaim against this transference, 'never say a word, but just see to get them changed in the first town ye ride through, for they are bran new frae the mint, and kenspeckle a wee bit.'

'You forget, Caleb,' said his master, striving to force back the money on his servant, and extricate the bridle from his hold — 'you forget that I have some gold pieces left of my own. Keep these to yourself, my old friend: and, once more, good day to you. I assure you, I have plenty. You know you have managed that our living should cost us little or nothing.'

'Aweel,' said Caleb, 'these will serve for you another time; but see ye hae enough, for, doubtless, for the credit of the family, there maun be some civility to the servants, and ye maun hae something to mak a show with when they say, "Master, will you bet a broad piece?" Then ye maun tak out your purse, and say, "I carena if I do"; and tak care no to agree on the articles of the wager, and just put up your purse again, and ——'

'This is intolerable, Caleb; I really must be gone.'

'And you will go, then?' said Caleb, loosening his hold upon the Master's cloak, and changing his didactics into a pathetic and mournful tone — 'and you *will* go, for a' I have told you about the propheecy, and the dead bride, and the Kelpie's quicksand? Aweel! a wilful man maun hae his way: he that will to Cupar, maun to Cupar. But pity of your life, sir, if ye be fowling or shooting in the Park, beware of du.. .g at the Mermaiden's Well —— He's gane! he's down the path

arrow-flight after her! The head is as clean taen aff the Ravenswood family this day as I wad clap the head aff a sybo!'

The old butler looked long after his master, often clearing away the dew as it rose to his eyes, that he might, as long as possible, distinguish his stately form from those of the other horsemen. 'Close to her bridle-rein — ay, close to her bridle-rein! Wisely saith the holy man, "By this also you may know that woman hath dominion over all men"; and without this lass would not our ruin have been a'thegither fulfilled.

With a heart fraught with such sad auguries did Caleb return to his necessary duties at Wolf's Crag, as soon as he could no longer distinguish the object of his anxiety among the group of riders, which diminished in the distance.

In the meantime the party pursued their route joyfully. Having once taken his resolution, the Master of Ravenswood was not of a character to hesitate or pause upon it. He abandoned himself to the pleasure he felt in Miss Ashton's company, and displayed an assiduous gallantry which approached as nearly to gaiety as the temper of his mind and state of his family permitted. The Lord Keeper was much struck with his depth of observation, and the unusual improvement which he had derived from his studies. Of these accomplishments Sir William Ashton's profession and habits of society rendered him an excellent judge; and he well knew how to appreciate a quality to which he himself was a total stranger — the brief and decided dauntlessness of the Master of Ravenswood's disposition, who seemed equally a stranger to doubt and to fear. In his heart the Lord Keeper rejoiced at having conciliated an adversary so formidable, while, with a mixture of pleasure and anxiety, he anticipated the great things his young companion might achieve, were the breath of court-favour to fill his sails.

'What could she desire,' he thought, his mind always conjuring up opposition in the person of Lady Ashton to his now prevailing wish — 'what could a woman desire in a match more than the sopiting of a very dangerous claim, and the alliance of a son-in-law, noble, brave, well-gifted, and highly connected; sure to float whenever the tide sets his way; strong, exactly where we are weak, in pedigree and in the temper of a swordsman? Sure, no reasonable woman would hesitate. But, alas —— !' Here his argument was stopped by the consciousness that Lady Ashton was not always reasonable, in his sense of the word. 'To prefer some clownish Merse laird to the gallant young nobleman, and to the secure possession of Ravenswood

upon terms of easy compromise — it would be the act of a madwoman!'

Thus pondered the veteran politician, until they reached Bittlebrains' House, where it had been previously settled they were to dine and repose themselves, and prosecute their journey in the afternoon.

They were received with an excess of hospitality; and the most marked attention was offered to the Master of Ravenswood, in particular, by their noble entertainers. The truth was, that Lord Bittlebrains had obtained his peerage by a good deal of plausibility, an art of building up a character for wisdom upon a very trite style of commonplace eloquence, a steady observation of the changes of the times, and the power of rendering certain political services to those who could best reward them. His lady and he, not feeling quite easy under their new honours, to which use had not adapted their feelings, were very desirous to procure the fraternal countenance of those who were born denizens of the regions into which they had been exalted from a lower sphere. The extreme attention which they paid to the Master of Ravenswood had its usual effect in exalting his importance in the eyes of the Lord Keeper, who, although he had a reasonable degree of contempt for Lord Bittlebrains' general parts, entertained a high opinion of the acuteness of his judgment in all matters of self-interest.

'I wish Lady Ashton had seen this,' was his internal reflection; 'no man knows so well as Bittlebrains on which side his bread is buttered; and he fawns on the Master like a beggar' messan on a cook. And my lady, too, bringing forward 'beetle-browed misses to skirl and play upon the virginals, as she said, "Pick and choose." They are no more comparable Lucy than an owl is to a cygnet, and so they may carry their black brows to a farther market.'

The entertainment being ended, our travellers, who had still to measure the longest part of their journey, resumed their horses; and after the Lord Keeper, the Master, and the domesties had drunk *deoch-an-dorroch*, or the stirrup cup, in the liquors adapted to their various ranks, the cavalcade resumed its progress.

It was dark by the time they entered the avenue of Ravenswood Castle, a long straight line leading directly to the front of the house, flanked with huge elm-trees, which sighed to the night wind, as if they compassionated the heir of their ancient proprietors, who now returned to their shades in the society,

and almost in the retinue, of their new master. Some feelings of the same kind oppressed the mind of the Master himself. He gradually became silent, and dropped a little behind the lady, at whose bridle-rein he had hitherto waited with such devotion. He well recollected the period when, at the same hour in the evening, he had accompanied his father, as that nobleman left, never again to return to it, the mansion from which he derived his name and title. The extensive front of the old castle, on which he remembered having often looked back, was then 'as black as mourning weed.' The same front now glanced with many lights, some throwing far forward into the night a fixed and stationary blaze, and others hurrying from one window to another, intimating the bustle and busy preparations preceding their arrival, which had been intimated by an avant-courier. The contrast pressed so strongly upon the Master's heart as to awaken some of the sterner feelings with which he had been accustomed to regard the new lord of his paternal domain, and to impress his countenance with an air of severe gravity, when, alighted from his horse, he stood in the hall no longer his own, surrounded by the numerous menials of its present owner.

The Lord Keeper, when about to welcome him with the cordiality which their late intercourse seemed to render proper, became aware of the change, refrained from his purpose, and only intimated the ceremony of reception by a deep reverence to his guest, seeming thus delicately to share the feelings which predominated on his brow.

Two upper domestics, bearing each a huge pair of silver candlesticks, now marshalled the company into a large saloon, or withdrawing-room, where new alterations impressed upon Ravenswood the superior wealth of the present inhabitants of the castle. The mouldering tapestry, which, in his father's time, had half covered the walls of this stately apartment, and half streamed from them in tatters, had given place to a complete finishing of wainscot, the cornice of which, as well as the frames of the various compartments, were ornamented with festoons of flowers and with birds, which, though carved in oak, seemed, such was the art of the chisel, actually to swell their throats and flutter their wings. Several old family portraits of armed heroes of the house of Ravenswood, together with a suit or two of old armour and some military weapons, had given place to those of King William and Queen Mary, of Sir Thomas Hope and Lord Stair, two distinguished Scottish

lawyers. The pictures of the Lord Keeper's father and mother were also to be seen; the latter, sour, shrewish, and solemn, in her black hood and close pinners, with a book of devotion in her hand; the former, exhibiting beneath a black silk Geneva cowl, or skull-cap, which sat as close to the head as if it had been shaven, a pinched, peevish, Puritanical set of features, terminating in a hungry, reddish, peaked beard, forming on the whole a countenance in the expression of which the hypocrite seemed to contend with the miser and the knave. 'And it is to make room for such scarecrows as these,' though Ravenswood, 'that my ancestors have been torn down from the walls which they erected!' He looked at them again, and, as he looked, the recollection of Lucy Ashton, for she had not entered the apartment with them, seemed less lively in his imagination. There were also two or three Dutch drolleries, as the pictures of Ostade and Teniers were then termed, with one good painting of the Italian school. There was, besides, a noble full-length of the Lord Keeper in his robes of office, placed beside his lady in silk and ermine, a haughty beauty, bearing in her looks all the pride of the house of Douglas, from which she was descended. The painter, notwithstanding his skill, overcome by the reality, or, perhaps, from a suppressed sense of humour, had not been able to give the husband on the canvas that air of awful rule and right supremacy which indicates the full possession of domestic authority. It was obvious at the first glance that, despite mace and gold frogs, the Lord Keeper was somewhat henpecked. The floor of this fine saloon was laid with rich carpets, huge fires blazed in the double chimneys, and ten silver sconces, reflecting with their bright plates the lights which they supported, made the whole seem as brilliant as day.

'Would you choose any refreshment, Master?' said Sir William Ashton, not unwilling to break the awkward silence.

He received no answer, the Master being so busily engaged in marking the various changes which had taken place in the apartment, that he hardly heard the Lord Keeper address him. A repetition of the offer of refreshment, with the addition, that the family meal would be presently ready, compelled his attention, and reminded him that he acted a weak, perhaps even a ridiculous, part in suffering himself to be overcome by the circumstances in which he found himself. He compelled himself, therefore, to enter into conversation with Sir William Ashton, with as much appearance of indifference as he could well command.

'You will not be surprised, Sir William, that I am interested in the changes you have made for the better in this apartment. In my father's time, after our misfortunes compelled him to live in retirement, it was little used, except by me as a play room, when the weather would not permit me to go abroad. In that recess was my little workshop, where I treasured the few carpenters' tools which old Caleb procured for me, and taught me how to use; there, in yonder corner, under that handsome silver sconce, I kept my fishing-rods and hunting poles, bows and arrows.'

'I have a young birkie,' said the Lord Keeper, willing to change the tone of the conversation, 'of much the same turn. He is never happy save when he is in the field. I wonder he is not here. Here, Lockhard; send William Shaw for Mr. Henry. I suppose he is, as usual, tied to Lucy's apron string; that foolish girl, Master, draws the whole family after her at her pleasure.'

'Even this allusion to his daughter, though artfully thrown out, did not recall Ravenswood from his own topic.

'We were obliged to leave,' he said, 'some armour and portraits in this apartment; may I ask where they have been removed to?'

'Why,' answered the Keeper, with some hesitation, 'the room was fitted up in our absence, and *cedant arma togæ* is the maxim of lawyers, you know: I am afraid it has been here somewhat too literally complied with. I hope — I believe they are safe, I am sure I gave orders; may I hope that when they are recovered, and put in proper order, you will do me the honour to accept them at my hand, as an atonement for their accidental derangement?'

The Master of Ravenswood bowed stiffly, and, with folded arms, again resumed his survey of the room.

Henry, a spoilt boy of fifteen, burst into the room, and ran up to his father. 'Think of Lucy, papa; she has come home so cross and so fractious, that she will not go down to the stable to see my new pony, that Bob Wilson brought from the Mull of Galloway.'

'I think you were very unreasonable to ask her,' said the Keeper.

'Then you are as cross as she is,' answered the boy; 'but when mamma comes home, she 'll claw up both your mittens.

'Hush your impertinence, you little forward imp!' said his father; 'where is your tutor?'

'Gone to a wedding in Dunbar; I hope he 'll get a haggis to his dinner'; and he begun to sing the old Scottish song —

'There was a haggis in Dunbar,
Fal de ral, etc.
Mony better and few waur,
Fal de ral,' etc.

'I am much obliged to Mr. Cordery for his attentions,' said the Lord Keeper; 'and pray who has had the charge of you while I was away, Mr. Henry?'

'Norman and Bob Wilson, forbye my own self.'

'A groom and a gamekeeper, and your own silly self — proper guardians for a young advocate! Why, you will never know any statutes but those against shooting red-deer, killing salmon, and ——'

'And speaking of red-deer,' said the young scapegrace, interrupting his father without scruple or hesitation, 'Norman has shot a buck, and I showed the branches to Lucy, and she says they have but eight tynes; and she says that you killed a deer with Lord Bittlebrains' hounds, when you were west away, and, do you know, she says it had ten tynes; is it true?'

'It may have had twenty, Henry, for what I know; but if you go to that gentleman, he can tell you all about it. Go speak to him, Henry; it is the Master of Ravenswood.'

While they conversed thus, the father and son were standing by the fire; and the Master, having walked towards the upper end of the apartment, stood with his back towards them, apparently engaged in examining one of the paintings. The boy ran up to him, and pulled him by the skirt of the coat with the freedom of a spoilt child, saying, 'I say, sir, if you please to tell me ——' but when the Master turned round, and Henry saw his face, he became suddenly and totally disconcerted; walked two or three steps backward and still gazed on Ravenswood with an air of fear and wonder, which had totally banished from his features their usual expression of pert vivacity.

'Come to me, young gentleman,' said the Master, 'and I will tell you all I know about the hunt.'

'Go to the gentleman, Henry,' said his father; 'you are not used to be so shy.'

But neither invitation nor exhortation had any effect on the boy. On the contrary, he turned round as soon as he had

completed his survey of the Master, and walking as cautiously as if he had been treading upon eggs, he glided back to his father, and pressed as close to him as possible. Ravenswood, to avoid hearing the dispute betwixt the father and the over-indulged boy, thought it most polite to turn his face once more towards the pictures, and pay no attention to what they said.

'Why do you not speak to the Master, you little fool?' said the Lord Keeper.

'I am afraid,' said Henry, in a very low tone of voice.

'Afraid, you goose!' said his father, giving him a slight shake by the collar. 'What makes you afraid?'

'What makes him so like the picture of Sir Malise Ravenswood, then?' said the boy, whispering.

'What picture, you natural?' said his father. 'I used to think you only a scapegrace, but I believe you will turn out a born idiot.'

'I tell you, it is the picture of old Malise of Ravenswood, and he is as like it as if he had loupen out of the canvas; and it is up in the old baron's hall that the maids launder the clothes in; and it has armour, and not a coat like the gentleman; and he has not a beard and whiskers like the picture; and it has another kind of thing about the throat, and no band-strings as he has; and ——'

'And why should not the gentleman be like his ancestor, you silly boy?' said the Lord Keeper.

'Ay; but if he is come to chase us all out of the castle,' said the boy, 'and has twenty men at his back in disguise; and is come to say, with a hollow voice, "I bide my time"; and is to kill you on the hearth as Malise did the other man, and whose blood is still to be seen!'

'Hush! nonsense!' said the Lord Keeper, not himself much pleased to hear these disagreeable coincidences forced on his notice. 'Master, here comes Lockhard to say supper is served.'

And, at the same instant, Lucy entered at another door, having changed her dress since her return. The exquisite feminine beauty of her countenance, now shaded only by a profusion of sunny tresses; the sylph-like form, disencumbered of her heavy riding-skirt and mantled in azure silk; the grace of her manner and of her smile, cleared, with a celerity which surprised the Master himself, all the gloomy and unfavourable thoughts which had for some time overclouded his fancy. In those features, so simply sweet, he could trace no alliance with

the pinched visage of the peak-bearded, black-capped Puritan, or his starched, withered spouse, with the craft expressed in the Lord Keeper's countenance, or the haughtiness which predominated in that of his lady; and, while he gazed on Lucy Ashton, she seemed to be an angel descended on earth, unallied to the coarser mortals among whom she deigned to dwell for a season. Such is the power of beauty over a youthful and enthusiastic fancy.

CHAPTER XIX

I do too ill in this,
And must not think but that a parent's plaint
Will move the heavens to pour forth misery
Upon the head of disobedience.
Yet reason tells us, parents are o'erseen,
When with too strict a rein they do hold in
Their child's affection, and control that love,
Which the high powers divine inspire them with.

The Hog hath lost his Pearl.

THE feast of Ravenswood Castle was as remarkable for its profusion as that of Wolf's Crag had been for its ill-veiled penury. The Lord Keeper might feel internal pride at the contrast, but he had too much tact to suffer it to appear. On the contrary, he seemed to remember with pleasure what he called Mr. Balderstone's bachelor's meal, and to be rather disgusted than pleased with the display upon his own groaning board.

'We do these things,' he said, 'because others do them: but I was bred a plain man at my father's frugal table, and I should like well would my wife and family permit me to return to my sowens and my poor-man-of-mutton.'[1]

This was a little overstretched. The Master only answered, 'That different ranks — I mean,' said he, correcting himself, 'different degrees of wealth require a different style of housekeeping.'

This dry remark put a stop to farther conversation on the subject, nor is it necessary to record that which was substituted in its place. The evening was spent with freedom, and even cordiality; and Henry had so far overcome his first apprehensions, that he had settled a party for coursing a stag with the representative and living resemblance of grim Sir Malise of Ravenswood, called the Revenger. The next morning was the appointed time. It rose upon active sportsmen and successful sport. The banquet came in course; and a pressing invitation

[1] See Note 8.

to tarry yet another day was given and accepted. This Ravenswood had resolved should be the last of his stay; but he recollected he had not yet visited the ancient and devoted servant of his house, Old Alice, and it was but kind to dedicate one morning to the gratification of so ancient an adherent.

To visit Alice, therefore, a day was devoted, and Lucy was the Master's guide upon the way. Henry, it is true, accompanied them, and took from their walk the air of a *tête à tête*, while, in reality, it was little else, considering the variety of circumstances which occurred to prevent the boy from giving the least attention to what passed between his companions. Now a rook settled on a branch within shot; anon a hare crossed their path, and Henry and his greyhound went astray in pursuit of it; then he had to hold a long conversation with the forester, which detained him a while behind his companions; and again he went to examine the earth of a badger, which carried him on a good way before them.

The conversation betwixt the Master and his sister, meanwhile, took an interesting, and almost a confidential, turn. She could not help mentioning her sense of the pain he must feel in visiting scenes so well known to him, bearing now an aspect so different; and so gently was her sympathy expressed, that Ravenswood felt it for a moment as a full requital of all his misfortunes. Some such sentiment escaped him, which Lucy heard with more of confusion than displeasure; and she may be forgiven the imprudence of listening to such language, considering that the situation in which she was placed by her father seemed to authorise Ravenswood to use it. Yet she made an effort to turn the conversation, and she succeeded; for the Master also had advanced farther than he intended, and his conscience had instantly checked him when he found himself on the verge of speaking love to the daughter of Sir William Ashton.

They now approached the hut of Old Alice, which had of late been rendered more comfortable, and presented an appearance less picturesque, perhaps, but far neater than before. The old woman was on her accustomed seat beneath the weeping birch, basking, with the listless enjoyment of age and infirmity, in the beams of the autumn sun. At the arrival of her visitors she turned her head towards them. 'I hear your step, Miss Ashton,' she said, 'but the gentleman who attends you — not my lord, your father.'

'And why should you think so, Alice?' said Lucy; 'or how

is it possible for you to judge so accurately by the sound of a step, on this firm earth, and in the open air?'

'My hearing, my child, has been sharpened by my blindness, and I can now draw conclusions from the slightest sounds, which formerly reached my ears as unheeded as they now approach yours. Necessity is a stern but an excellent schoolmistress, and she that has lost her sight must collect her information from other sources.'

'Well, you hear a man's step, I grant it,' said Lucy; 'but why, Alice, may it not be my father's?'

'The pace of age, my love, is timid and cautious: the foot takes leave of the earth slowly, and is planted down upon it with hesitation; it is the hasty and determined step of youth that I now hear, and — could I give credit to so strange a thought — I should say it was the step of a Ravenswood.'

'This is indeed,' said Ravenswood, 'an acuteness of organ which I could not have credited had I not witnessed it. I am indeed the Master of Ravenswood, Alice — the son of your old master.'

'You!' said the old woman, with almost a scream of surprise — 'you the Master of Ravenswood — here — in this place, and thus accompanied! I cannot believe it. Let me pass my old hand over your face, that my touch may bear witness to my ears.'

The Master sate down beside her on the earthen bank, and permitted her to touch his features with her trembling hand.

'It is indeed!' she said — 'it is the features as well as the voice of Ravenswood — the high lines of pride, as well as the bold and haughty tone. But what do you here, Master of Ravenswood? — what do you in your enemy's domain, and in company with his child?'

As Old Alice spoke, her face kindled, as probably that of an ancient feudal vassal might have done in whose presence his youthful liege-lord had showed some symptom of degenerating from the spirit of his ancestors.

'The Master of Ravenswood,' said Lucy, who liked not the tone of this expostulation, and was desirous to abridge it, 'is upon a visit to my father.'

'Indeed!' said the old blind woman, in an accent of surprise.

'I knew,' continued Lucy, 'I should do him a pleasure by conducting him to your cottage.'

'Where, to say the truth, Alice,' said Ravenswood, 'I expected a more cordial reception.'

'It is most wonderful!' said the old woman, muttering to

herself; 'but the ways of Heaven are not like our ways, and its judgments are brought about by means far beyond our fathoming. Hearken, young man,' she said; 'your fathers were implacable, but they were honourable foes; they sought not to ruin their enemies under the mask of hospitality. What have you to do with Lucy Ashton? why should your steps move in the same footpath with hers? why should your voice sound in the same chord and time with those of Sir William Ashton's daughter? Young man, he who aims at revenge by dishonourable means ——'

'Be silent, woman!' said Ravenswood, sternly; 'is it the devil that prompts your voice? Know that this young lady has not on earth a friend who would venture farther to save her from injury or from insult.'

'And is it even so?' said the old woman, in an altered but melancholy tone, 'then God help you both!'

'Amen! Alice,' said Lucy, who had not comprehended the import of what the blind woman had hinted, 'and send you your senses, Alice, and your good-humour. If you hold this mysterious language, instead of welcoming your friends, they will think of you as other people do.'

'And how do other people think?' said Ravenswood, for he also began to believe the old woman spoke with incoherence.

'They think,' said Henry Ashton, who came up at that moment, and whispered into Ravenswood's ear, 'that she is a witch, that should have been burned with them that suffered at Haddington.'

'What is that you say?' said Alice, turning towards the boy, her sightless visage inflamed with passion: 'that I am a witch, and ought to have suffered with the helpless old wretches who were murdered at Haddington?'

'Hear to that now,' again whispered Henry, 'and me whispering lower than a wren cheeps!'

'If the usurer, and the oppressor, and the grinder of the poor man's face, and the remover of ancient landmarks, and the subverter of ancient houses, were at the same stake with me, I could say, "Light the fire, in God's name!"'

'This is dreadful,' said Lucy; 'I have never seen the poor deserted woman in this state of mind; but age and poverty can ill bear reproach. Come, Henry, we will leave her for the present: she wishes to speak with the Master alone. We will walk homeward, and rest us,' see added, looking at Ravenswood, 'by the Mermaiden's Well.'

'And Alice,' said the boy, 'if you know of any hare that comes through among the deer, and makes them drop their calves out of season, you may tell her, with my compliments to command, that if Norman has not got a silver bullet ready for her, I 'll lend him one of my doublet-buttons on purpose.'

Alice made no answer till she was aware that the sister and brother were out of hearing. She then said to Ravenswood, 'And you, too, are angry with me for my love? It is just that strangers should be offended, but you, too, are angry!'

'I am not angry, Alice,' said the Master, 'only surprised that you, whose good sense I have heard so often praised, should give way to offensive and unfounded suspicions.'

'Offensive!' said Alice. 'Ay, truth is ever offensive; but, surely, not unfounded.'

'I tell you, dame, most groundless,' replied Ravenswood.

'Then the world has changed its wont, and the Ravenswoods their hereditary temper, and the eyes of Old Alice's understanding are yet more blind than those of her countenance. When did a Ravenswood seek the house of his enemy but with the purpose of revenge? and hither are you come, Edgar Ravenswood, either in fatal anger or in still more fatal love.'

'In neither,' said Ravenswood, 'I give you mine honour — I mean, I assure you.'

Alice could not see his blushing cheek, but she noticed his hesitation, and that he retracted the pledge which he seemed at first disposed to attach to his denial.

'It is so, then,' she said, 'and therefore she is to tarry by the Mermaiden's Well! Often has it been called a place fatal to the race of Ravenswood — often has it proved so; but never was it likely to verify old sayings as much as on this day.'

'You drive me to madness, Alice,' said Ravenswood; 'you are more silly and more superstitious than old Balderstone. Are you such a wretched Christian as to suppose I would in the present day levy war against the Ashton family, as was the sanguinary custom in elder times? or do you suppose me so foolish, that I cannot walk by a young lady's side without plunging headlong in love with her?'

'My thoughts,' replied Alice, 'are my own; and if my mortal sight is closed to objects present with me, it may be I can look with more steadiness into future events. Are you prepared to sit lowest at the board which was once your father's own, unwillingly, as a connexion and ally of his proud successor? Are you ready to live on his bounty; to follow him in the bye paths

of intrigue and chicane, which none can better point out to you: to gnaw the bones of his prey when he has devoured the substance? Can you say as Sir William Ashton says, think as he thinks, vote as he votes, and call your father's murderer your worshipful father-in-law and revered patron? Master of Ravenswood, I am the eldest servant of your house, and I would rather see you shrouded and coffined!'

The tumult in Ravenswood's mind was uncommonly great; she struck upon and awakened a chord which he had for some time successfully silenced. He strode backwards and forwards through the little garden with a hasty pace; and at length checking himself, and stopping right opposite to Alice, he exclaimed, 'Woman! on the verge of the grave, dare you urge the son of your master to blood and to revenge?'

'God forbid!' said Alice, solemnly; 'and therefore I would have you depart these fatal bounds, where your love, as well as your hatred, threatens sure mischief, or at least disgrace, both to yourself and to others. I would shield, were it in the power of this withered hand, the Ashtons from you, and you from them, and both from their own passions. You can have nothing — ought to have nothing, in common with them. Begone from among them; and if God has destined vengeance on the oppressor's house, do not you be the instrument.'

'I will think on what you have said, Alice,' said Ravenswood, more composedly. 'I believe you mean truly and faithfully by me, but you urge the freedom of an ancient domestic somewhat too far. But farewell; and if Heaven afford me better means, I will not fail to contribute to your comfort.'

He attempted to put a piece of gold into her hand, which she refused to receive; and, in the slight struggle attending his wish to force it upon her, it dropped to the earth.

'Let it remain an instant on the ground,' said Alice, as the Master stooped to raise it; 'and believe me, that piece of gold is an emblem of her whom you love; she is as precious, I grant, but you must stoop even to abasement before you can win her. For me, I have as little to do with gold as with earthly passions; and the best news that the world has in store for me is, that Edgar Ravenswood is a hundred miles distant from the seat of his ancestors, with the determination never again to behold it.'

'Alice,' said the Master, who began to think this earnestness had some more secret cause than arose from anything that the blind woman could have gathered from this casual visit, 'I have heard you praised by my mother for your sense, acuteness,

and fidelity; you are no fool to start at shadows, or to dread old superstitious saws, like Caleb Balderstone; tell me distinctly where my danger lies, if you are aware of any which is tending towards me. If I know myself, I am free from all such views respecting Miss Ashton as you impute to me. I have necessary business to settle with Sir William: that arranged, I shall depart, and with as little wish, as you may easily believe, to return to a place full of melancholy subjects of reflection, as you have to see me here.'

Alice bent her sightless eyes on the ground, and was for some time plunged in deep meditation. 'I will speak the truth,' she said at length, raising up her head — 'I will tell you the source of my apprehensions, whether my candour be for good or for evil. Lucy Ashton loves you, Lord of Ravenswood!'

'It is impossible,' said the Master.

'A thousand circumstances have proved it to me,' replied the blind woman. 'Her thoughts have turned on no one else since you saved her from death, and that my experienced judgment has won from her own conversation. Having told you this — if you are indeed a gentleman and your father's son — you will make it a motive for flying from her presence. Her passion will die like a lamp for want of that the flame should feed upon; but, if you remain here, her destruction, or yours, or that of both, will be the inevitable consequence of her misplaced attachment. I tell you this secret unwillingly, but it could not have been hid long from your own observation, and it is better you learn it from mine. Depart, Master of Ravenswood: you have my secret. If you remain an hour under Sir William Ashton's roof without the resolution to marry his daughter, you are a villain; if with the purpose of allying yourself with him, you are an infatuated and predestined fool.'

So saying, the old blind woman arose, assumed her staff, and, tottering to her hut, entered it and closed the door, leaving Ravenswood to his own reflections.

CHAPTER XX

Lovelier in her own retired abode
. . . than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook — or Lady of the Mere
Lone sitting by the shores of old romance.

WORDSWORTH.

THE meditations of Ravenswood were of a very mixed complexion. He saw himself at once in the very dilemma which he had for some time felt apprehensive he might be placed in. The pleasure he felt in Lucy's company had indeed approached to fascination, yet it had never altogether surmounted his internal reluctance to wed with the daughter of his father's foe; and even in forgiving Sir William Ashton the injuries which his family had received, and giving him credit for the kind intentions he professed to entertain, he could not bring himself to contemplate as possible an alliance betwixt their houses. Still, he felt that Alice spoke truth, and that his honour now required he should take an instant leave of Ravenswood Castle, or become a suitor of Lucy Ashton. The possibility of being rejected, too, should he make advances to her wealthy and powerful father — to sue for the hand of an Ashton and be refused — this were a consummation too disgraceful. 'I wish her well,' he said to himself, 'and for her sake I forgive the injuries her father has done to my house; but I will never — no, never see her more!'

With one bitter pang he adopted this resolution, just as he came to where two paths parted: the one to the Mermaiden's Fountain, where he knew Lucy waited him, the other leading to the castle by another and more circuitous road. He paused an instant when about to take the latter path, thinking what apology he should make for conduct which must needs seem extraordinary, and had just muttered to himself, 'Sudden news from Edinburgh — any pretext will serve; only let me dally no longer here,' when young Henry came flying up to

him, half out of breath — 'Master, Master, you must give Lucy your arm back to the castle, for I cannot give her mine; for Norman is waiting for me, and I am to go with him to make his ring-walk, and I would not stay away for a gold Jacobus; and Lucy is afraid to walk home alone, though all the wild nowt have been shot, and so you must come away directly.'

Betwixt two scales equally loaded, a feather's weight will turn the scale. 'It is impossible for me to leave the young lady in the wood alone,' said Ravenswood; 'to see her once more can be of little consequence, after the frequent meetings we have had. I ought, too, in courtesy, to apprise her of my intention to quit the castle.'

And having thus satisfied himself that he was taking not only a wise, but an absolutely necessary, step, he took the path to the fatal fountain. Henry no sooner saw him on the way to join his sister than he was off like lightning in another direction, to enjoy the society of the forester in their congenial pursuits. Ravenswood, not allowing himself to give a second thought to the propriety of his own conduct, walked with a quick step towards the stream, where he found Lucy seated alone by the ruin.

She sate upon one of the disjointed stones of the ancient fountain, and seemed to watch the progress of its current, as it bubbled forth to daylight, in gay and sparkling profusion, from under the shadow of the ribbed and darksome vault, with which veneration, or perhaps remorse, had canopied its source. To a superstitious eye, Lucy Ashton, folded in her plaided mantle, with her long hair, escaping partly from the snood and falling upon her silver neck, might have suggested the idea of the murdered Nymph of the Fountain. But Ravenswood only saw a female exquisitely beautiful, and rendered yet more so in his eyes — how could it be otherwise? — by the consciousness that she had placed her affections on him. As he gazed on her, he felt his fixed resolution melting like wax in the sun, and hastened, therefore, from his concealment in the neighbouring thicket. She saluted him, but did not arise from the stone on which she was seated.

'My madcap brother,' she said, 'has left me, but I expect him back in a few minutes; for, fortunately, as anything pleases him for a minute, nothing has charms for him much longer.'

Ravenswood did not feel the power of informing Lucy that her brother meditated a distant excursion, and would not

return in haste. He sate himself down on the grass, at some little distance from Miss Ashton, and both were silent for a short space.

'I like this spot,' said Lucy at length, as if she had found the silence embarrassing; 'the bubbling murmur of the clear fountain, the waving of the trees, the profusion of grass and wild-flowers that rise among the ruins, make it like a scene in romance. I think, too, I have heard it is a spot connected with the legendary lore which I love so well.'

'It has been thought,' answered Ravenswood, 'a fatal spot to my family; and I have some reason to term it so, for it was here I first saw Miss Ashton; and it is here I must take my leave of her for ever.'

The blood, which the first part of this speech called into Lucy's cheeks, was speedily expelled by its conclusion.

'To take leave of us, Master!' she exclaimed; 'what can have happened to hurry you away? I know Alice hates – I mean dislikes my father; and I hardly understood her humour to-day, it was so mysterious. But I am certain my father is sincerely grateful for the high service you rendered us. Let me hope that, having won your friendship hardly, we shall not lose it lightly.'

'Lose it, Miss Ashton!' said the Master of Ravenswood. 'No; wherever my fortune calls me – whatever she inflicts upon me — it is your friend – your sincere friend, who acts or suffers. But there is a fate on me, and I must go, or I shall add the ruin of others to my own.'

'Yet do not go from us, Master,' said Lucy; and she laid her hand, in all simplicity and kindness, upon the skirt of his cloak, as if to detain him. 'You shall not part from us. My father is powerful, he has friends that are more so than himself; do not go till you see what his gratitude will do for you. Believe me, he is already labouring in your behalf with the council.'

'It may be so,' said the Master, proudly; 'yet it is not to your father, Miss Ashton, but to my own exertions, that I ought to owe success in the career on which I am about to enter. My preparations are already made – a sword and a cloak, and a bold heart and a determined hand.'

Lucy covered her face with her hands, and the tears, in spite of her, forced their way between her fingers.

'Forgive me,' said Ravenswood, taking her right hand, which, after slight resistance, she yielded to him, still continuing to shade her face with the left — 'I am too rude — too rough

— too intractable to deal with any being so soft and gentle as you are. Forget that so stern a vision has crossed your path of life; and let me pursue mine, sure that I can meet with no worse misfortune after the moment it divides me from your side.'

Lucy wept on, but her tears were less bitter. Each attempt which the Master made to explain his purpose of departure only proved a new evidence of his desire to stay; until, at length, instead of bidding her farewell, he gave his faith to her for ever, and received her troth in return. The whole passed so suddenly, and arose so much out of the immediate impulse of the moment, that ere the Master of Ravenswood could reflect upon the consequences of the step which he had taken, their lips, as well as their hands, had pledged the sincerity of their affection.

'And now,' he said, after a moment's consideration, 'it is fit I should speak to Sir William Ashton; he must know of our engagement. Ravenswood must not seem to dwell under his roof to solicit clandestinely the affections of his daughter.'

'You would not speak to my father on the subject?' said Lucy, doubtingly; and then added more warmly, 'O do not do not! Let your lot in life be determined — your station and purpose ascertained, before you address my father. I am sure he loves you — I think he will consent; but then my mother ——!'

She paused, ashamed to express the doubt she felt how far her father dared to form any positive resolution on this most important subject without the consent of his lady.

'Your mother, my Lucy!' replied Ravenswood. 'She is of the house of Douglas, a house that has intermarried with mine even when its glory and power were at the highest; what could your mother object to my alliance?'

'I did not say object,' said Lucy; 'but she is jealous of her rights, and may claim a mother's title to be consulted in the first instance.'

'Be it so,' replied Ravenswood. 'London is distant, but a letter will reach it and receive an answer within a fortnight: I will not press on the Lord Keeper for an instant reply to my proposal.'

'But,' hesitated Lucy, 'were it not better to wait — to wait a few weeks? Were my mother to see you — to know you, I am sure she would approve; but you are unacquainted personally, and the ancient feud between the families ——'

Ravenswood fixed upon her his keen dark eyes, as if he was desirous of penetrating into her very soul.

'Lucy,' he said, 'I have sacrificed to you projects of vengeance long nursed, and sworn to with ceremonies little better than heathen — I sacrificed them to your image, ere I knew the worth which it represented. In the evening which succeeded my poor father's funeral, I cut a lock from my hair, and, as it consumed in the fire, I swore that my rage and revenge should pursue his enemies, until they shrivelled before me like that scorched-up symbol of annihilation.'

'It was a deadly sin,' said Lucy, turning pale, 'to make a vow so fatal.'

'I acknowledge it,' said Ravenswood, 'and it had been a worse crime to keep it. It was for your sake that I abjured these purposes of vengeance, though I scarce knew that such was the argument by which I was conquered, until I saw you once more, and became conscious of the influence you possessed over me.'

'And why do you now,' said Lucy, 'recall sentiments so terrible — sentiments so inconsistent with those you profess for me — with those your importunity has prevailed on me to acknowledge?'

'Because,' said her lover, 'I would impress on you the price at which I have bought your love — the right I have to expect your constancy. I say not that I have bartered for it the honour of my house, its last remaining possession; but though I say it not, and think it not, I cannot conceal from myself that the world may do both.'

'If such are your sentiments,' said Lucy, 'you have played a cruel game with me. But it is not too late to give it over: take back the faith and troth which you could not plight to me without suffering abatement of honour — let what is passed be as if it had not been — forget me; I will endeavour to forget myself.'

'You do me injustice,' said the Master of Ravenswood — 'by all I hold true and honourable, you do me the extremity of injustice; if I mentioned the price at which I have bought your love, it is only to show how much I prize it, to bind our engagement by a still firmer tie, and to show, by what I have done to attain this station in your regard, how much I must suffer should you ever break your faith.'

'And why, Ravenswood,' answered Lucy, 'should you think that possible? Why should you urge me with even the mention of infidelity? Is it because I ask you to delay applying to my father for a little space of time? Bind me by what vows you

please ; if vows are unnecessary to secure constancy, they may yet prevent suspicion.'

Ravenswood pleaded, apologised, and even kneeled, to appease her displeasure ; and Lucy, as placable as she was single-hearted, readily forgave the offence which his doubts had implied. The dispute thus agitated, however, ended by the lovers going through an emblematic ceremony of their troth-plight, of which the vulgar still preserve some traces. They broke betwixt them the thin broad-piece of gold which Alice had refused to receive from Ravenswood.

'And never shall this leave my bosom,' said Lucy, as she hung the piece of gold round her neck, and concealed it with her handkerchief, 'until you, Edgar Ravenswood, ask me to resign it to you ; and, while I wear it, never shall that heart acknowledge another love than yours.'

With like protestations, Ravenswood placed his portion of the coin opposite to his heart. And now, at length, it struck them that time had hurried fast on during this interview, and their absence at the castle would be subject of remark, if not of alarm. As they arose to leave the fountain which had been witness of their mutual engagement, an arrow whistled through the air, and struck a raven perched on the sere branch of an old oak, near to where they had been seated. The bird fluttered a few yards and dropped at the feet of Lucy, whose dress was stained with some spots of its blood.

Miss Ashton was much alarmed, and Ravenswood, surprised and angry, looked everywhere for the marksman, who had given them a proof of his skill as little expected as desired. He was not long of discovering himself, being no other than Henry Ashton, who came running up with a crossbow in his hand.

'I knew I should startle you,' he said ; 'and do you know, you looked so busy that I hoped it would have fallen souse on your heads before you were aware of it. What was the Master saying to you, Lucy ?'

'I was telling your sister what an idle lad you were, keeping us waiting here for you so long,' said Ravenswood, to save Lucy's confusion.

'Waiting for me ! Why, I told you to see Lucy home, and that I was to go to make the ring-walk with old Norman in the Hayberry thicket, and you may be sure that would take a good hour, and we have all the deer's marks and furnishes got, while you were sitting here with Lucy, like a lazy loon.'

'Well, well, Mr. Henry,' said Ravenswood; 'but let us see how you will answer to me for killing the raven. Do you know, the ravens are all under the protection of the Lords of Ravenswood, and to kill one in their presence is such bad luck that it deserves the stab?'

'And that's what Norman said,' replied the boy; 'he came as far with me as within a flight-shot of you, and he said he never saw a raven sit still so near living folk, and he wished it might be for good luck, for the raven is one of the wildest birds that flies, unless it be a tame one; and so I crept on and on, till I was within threescore yards of him, and then whiz went the bolt, and there he lies, faith! Was it not well shot? and, I daresay, I have not shot in a crossbow — not ten times, maybe.'

'Admirably shot, indeed,' said Ravenswood; 'and you will be a fine marksman if you practise hard.'

'And that's what Norman says,' answered the boy; 'but I am sure it is not my fault if I do not practise enough; for, of free will, I would do little else, only my father and tutor are angry sometimes, and only Miss Lucy there gives herself airs about my being busy, for all she can sit idle by a well-side the whole day, when she has a handsome young gentleman to prate with. I have known her do so twenty times, if you will believe me.'

The boy looked at his sister as he spoke, and, in the midst of his mischievous chatter, had the sense to see that he was really inflicting pain upon her, though without being able to comprehend the cause or the amount.

'Come now, Lucy,' he said, 'don't greet; and if I have said anything beside the mark, I'll deny it again; and what does the Master of Ravenswood care if you had a hundred sweethearts? so ne'er put finger in your eye about it.'

The Master of Ravenswood was, for the moment, scarce satisfied with what he heard; yet his good sense naturally regarded it as the chatter of a spoilt boy, who strove to mortify his sister in the point which seemed most accessible for the time. But, although of a temper equally slow in receiving impressions and obstinate in retaining them, the prattle of Henry served to nourish in his mind some vague suspicion that his present engagement might only end in his being exposed, like a conquered enemy in a Roman triumph, a captive attendant on the car of a victor who meditated only the satiating his pride at the expense of the vanquished. There was, we

repeat it, no real ground whatever for such an apprehension, nor could he be said seriously to entertain such for a moment. Indeed, it was impossible to look at the clear blue eye of Lucy Ashton, and entertain the slightest permanent doubt concerning the sincerity of her disposition. Still, however, conscious pride and conscious poverty combined to render a mind suspicious which, in more fortunate circumstances, would have been a stanger to that as well as to every other meanness.

They reached the castle, where Sir William Ashton, who had been alarmed by the length of their stay, met them in the hall.

'Had Lucy,' he said, 'been in any other company than that of one who had shown he had so complete power of protecting her, he confessed he should have been very uneasy, and would have despatched persons in quest of them. But, in the company of the Master of Ravenswood, he knew his daughter had nothing to dread.'

Lucy commenced some apology for their long delay, but, conscience-struck, became confused as she proceeded; and when Ravenswood, coming to her assistance, endeavoured to render the explanation complete and satisfactory, he only involved himself in the same disorder, like one who, endeavouring to extricate his companion from a slough, entangles himself in the same tenacious swamp. It cannot be supposed that the confusion of the two youthful lovers escaped the observation of the subtle lawyer, accustomed, by habit and profession, to trace human nature through all her windings. But it was not his present policy to take any notice of what he observed. He desired to hold the Master of Ravenswood bound, but wished that he himself should remain free; and it did not occur to him that his plan might be defeated by Lucy's returning the passion which he hoped she might inspire. If she should adopt some romantic feelings towards Ravenswood, in which circumstances, or the positive and absolute opposition of Lady Ashton, might render it unadvisable to indulge her, the Lord Keeper conceived they might be easily superseded and annulled by a journey to Edinburgh, or even to London, a new set of Brussels lace, and the soft whispers of half a dozen lovers, anxious to replace him whom it was convenient she should renounce. This was his provision for the worst view of the case. But, according to its more probable issue, any passing favour she might entertain for the Master of Ravenswood might require encouragement rather than repression.

This seemed the more likely, as he had that very morning, since their departure from the castle, received a letter, the contents of which he hastened to communicate to Ravenswood. A foot-post had arrived with a packet to the Lord Keeper from that friend whom we have already mentioned, who was labouring hard underhand to consolidate a band of patriots, at the head of whom stood Sir William's greatest terror, the active and ambitious Marquis of A——. The success of this convenient friend had been such, that he had obtained from Sir William, not indeed a directly favourable answer, but certainly a most patient hearing. This he had reported to his principal, who had replied by the ancient French adage, '*Chiteau qui parle, et femme qui écoute, l'un et l'autre va se rendre.*' A statesman who hears you propose a change of measures without a reply was, according to the Marquis's opinion, in the situation of the fortress which parleys and the lady who listens, and he resolved to press the siege of the Lord Keeper.

The packet, therefore, contained a letter from his friend and ally, and another from himself, to the Lord Keeper, frankly offering an unceremonious visit. They were crossing the country to go to the southward; the roads were indifferent; the accommodation of the inns as execrable as possible; the Lord Keeper had been long acquainted intimately with one of his correspondents, and, though more slightly known to the Marquis, had yet enough of his lordship's acquaintance to render the visit sufficiently natural, and to shut the mouths of those who might be disposed to impute it to a political intrigue. He instantly accepted the offered visit, determined, however, that he would not pledge himself an inch farther for the furtherence of their views than *reason* (by which he meant his own self-interest) should plainly point out to him as proper.

Two circumstances particularly delighted him — the presence of Ravenswood, and the absence of his own lady. By having the former under his own roof, he conceived he might be able to quash all such hazardous and hostile proceedings as he might otherwise have been engaged in, under the patronage of the Marquis; and Lucy, he foresaw, would make, for his immediate purpose of delay and procrastination, a much better mistress of his family than her mother, who would, he was sure, in some shape or other, contrive to disconcert his political schemes by her proud and implacable temper.

His anxious solicitations that the Master would stay to re-

ceive his kinsman, were, of course, readily complied with, since the *éclaircissement* which had taken place at the Mermaiden's Fountain had removed all wish for sudden departure. Lucy and Lockhard had, therefore, orders to provide all things necessary in their different departments, for receiving the expected guests with a pomp and display of luxury very uncommon in Scotland at that remote period.

CHAPTER XXI

Marall. Sir, the man of honour 's come,
Newly alighted ——
Overreach. In without reply,
And do as I command. . . .
Is the loud music I gave order for
Ready to receive him?

New Way to pay Old Debts.

SIR William Ashton, although a man of sense, legal information, and great practical knowledge of the world, had yet some points of character which corresponded better with the timidity of his disposition and the supple arts by which he had risen in the world, than to the degree of eminence which he had attained; as they tended to show an original mediocrity of understanding, however highly it had been cultivated, and a native meaness of disposition, however carefully veiled. He loved the ostentatious display of his wealth, less as a man to whom habit has made it necessary, than as one to whom it is still delightful from its novelty. The most trivial details did not escape him; and Lucy soon learned to watch the flush of scorn which crossed Ravenswood's cheek, when he heard her father gravely arguing with Lockhard, nay, even with the old housekeeper, upon circumstances which, in families of rank, are left uncared for, because it is supposed impossible they can be neglected.

'I could pardon Sir William,' said Ravenswood, one evening after he had left the room, 'some general anxiety upon this occasion, for the Marquis's visit is an honour, and should be received as such; but I am worn out by these miserable minutiæ of the buttery, and the larder, and the very hen-coop — they drive me beyond my patience; I would rather endure the poverty of Wolf's Crag than be pestered with the wealth of Ravenswood Castle.'

'And yet,' said Lucy, 'it was by attention to these minutiæ that my father acquired the property ——'

'Which my ancestors sold for lack of it,' replied Ravenswood. 'Be it so; a porter still bears but a burden, though the burden be of gold.'

Lucy sighed; she perceived too plainly that her lover held in scorn the manners and habits of a father to whom she had long looked up as her best and most partial friend, whose fondness had often consoled her for her mother's contemptuous harshness.

The lovers soon discovered that they differed upon other and no less important topics. Religion, the mother of peace, was, in those days of discord, so much misconstrued and mistaken, that her rules and forms were the subject of the most opposite opinions and the most hostile animosities. The Lord Keeper, being a Whig, was, of course, a Presbyterian, and had found it convenient, at different periods, to express greater zeal for the kirk than perhaps he really felt. His family, equally of course, were trained under the same institution. Ravenswood, as we know, was a High Churchman, or Episcopalian, and frequently objected to Lucy the fanaticism of some of her own communion, while she intimated, rather than expressed, horror at the latitudinarian principles which she had been taught to think connected with the prelatical form of church government.

Thus, although their mutual affection seemed to increase rather than to be diminished as their characters opened more fully on each other, the feelings of each were mingled with some less agreeable ingredients. Lucy felt a secret awe, amid all her affection for Ravenswood. His soul was of a higher, prouder character than those with whom she had hitherto mixed in intercourse; his ideas were more fierce and free; and he contemned many of the opinions which had been inculcated upon her as chiefly demanding her veneration. On the other hand, Ravenswood saw in Lucy a soft and flexible character, which, in his eyes at least, seemed too susceptible of being moulded to any form by those with whom she lived. He felt that his own temper required a partner of a more independent spirit, who could set sail with him on his course of life, resolved as himself to dare indifferently the storm and the favouring breeze. But Lucy was so beautiful, so devoutly attached to him, of a temper so exquisitely soft and kind, that, while he could have wished it were possible to inspire her with a greater degree of firmness and resolution, and while he sometimes became impatient of the extreme fear which she expressed of their

attachment being prematurely discovered, he felt that the softness of a mind, amounting almost to feebleness, rendered her even dearer to him, as a being who had voluntarily clung to him for protection, and made him the arbiter of her fate for weal or woe. His feelings towards her at such moments were those which have been since so beautifully expressed by our immortal Joanna Baillie:

> Thou sweetest thing,
> That e'er did fix its lightly-fibred sprays
> To the rude rock, ah! wouldst thou cling to me?
> Rough and storm-worn I am; yet love me as
> Thou truly dost, I will love thee again
> With true and honest heart, though all unmeet
> To be the mate of such sweet gentleness.

Thus the very points in which they differed seemed, in some measure, to ensure the continuance of their mutual affection. If, indeed, they had so fully appreciated each other's character before the burst of passion in which they hastily pledged their faith to each other, Lucy might have feared Ravenswood too much ever to have loved him, and he might have construed her softness and docile temper as imbecility, rendering her unworthy of his regard. But they stood pledged to each other; and Lucy only feared that her lover's pride might one day teach him to regret his attachment; Ravenswood, that a mind so ductile as Lucy's might, in absence or difficulties, be induced, by the entreaties or influence of those around her, to renounce the engagement she had formed.

'Do not fear it,' said Lucy, when upon one occasion a hint of such suspicion escaped her lover: 'the mirrors which receive the reflection of all successive objects are framed of hard materials like glass or steel; the softer substances, when they receive an impression, retain it undefaced.'

'This is poetry, Lucy,' said Ravenswood; 'and in poetry there is always fallacy, and sometimes fiction.'

'Believe me, then, once more, in honest prose,' said Lucy, 'that, though I will never wed man without the consent of my parents, yet neither force nor persuasion shall dispose of my hand till you renounce the right I have given you to it.'

The lovers had ample time for such explanations. Henry was now more seldom their companion, being either a most unwilling attendant upon the lessons of his tutor, or a forward volunteer under the instructions of the foresters or grooms. As for the Keeper, his mornings were spent in his study, main-

taining correspondences of all kinds, and balancing in his anxious mind the various intelligence which he collected from every quarter concerning the expected change in Scottish politics, and the probable strength of the parties who were about to struggle for power. At other times he busied himself about arranging, and countermanding, and then again arranging, the preparations which he judged necessary for the reception of the Marquis of A——, whose arrival had been twice delayed by some necessary cause of detention.

In the midst of all these various avocations, political and domestic, he seemed not to observe how much his daughter and his guest were thrown into each other's society, and was censured by many of his neighbours, according to the fashion of neighbours in all countries, for suffering such an intimate connexion to take place betwixt two young persons. The only natural explanation was, that he designed them for each other; while, in truth, his only motive was to temporise and procrastinate until he should discover the real extent of the interest which the Marquis took in Ravenswood's affairs, and the power which he was likely to possess of advancing them. Until these points should be made both clear and manifest, the Lord Keeper resolved that he would do nothing to commit himself either in one shape or other; and, like many cunning persons, he overreached himself deplorably.

Amongst those who had been disposed to censure, with the greatest severity, the conduct of Sir William Ashton, in permitting the prolonged residence of Ravenswood under his roof, and his constant attendance on Miss Ashton, was the new Laird of Girnington, and his faithful squire and bottle holder, personages formerly well known to us by the names of Hayston and Bucklaw, and his companion Captain Craigengelt. The former had at length succeeded to the extensive property of his long-lived grand-aunt, and to considerable wealth besides, which he had employed in redeeming his paternal acres (by the name appertaining to which he still chose to be designated), notwithstanding Captain Craigengelt had proposed to him a most advantageous mode of vesting the money in Law's scheme, which was just then broached, and offered his services to travel express to Paris for the purpose. But Bucklaw had so far derived wisdom from adversity, that he would listen to no proposal which Craigengelt could invent, which had the slightest tendency to risk his newly acquired independence. He that once had eat pease-bannocks, drank sour wine, and slept in the

secret chamber at Wolf's Crag, would, he said, prize good cheer and a soft bed as long as he lived, and take special care not to need such hospitality again.

Craigengelt, therefore, found himself disappointed in the first hopes he had entertained of making a good hand of the Laird of Bucklaw. Still, however, he reaped many advantages from his friend's good fortune. Bucklaw, who had never been at all scrupulous in choosing his companions, was accustomed to, and entertained by, a fellow whom he could either laugh with or laugh at as he had a mind, who would take, according to Scottish phrase, 'the bit and the buffet,' understood all sports, whether within or without doors, and, when the laird had a mind for a bottle of wine (no infrequent circumstance), was always ready to save him from the scandal of getting drunk by himself. Upon these terms, Craigengelt was the frequent, almost the constant, inmate of the house of Girnington.

In no time, and under no possibility of circumstances, could good have been derived from such an intimacy, however its bad consequences might be qualified by the thorough knowledge which Bucklaw possessed of his dependant's character, and the high contempt in which he held it. But, as circumstances stood, this evil communication was particularly liable to corrupt what good principles nature had implanted in the patron.

Craigengelt had never forgiven the scorn with which Ravenswood had torn the mask of courage and honesty from his countenance: and to exasperate Bucklaw's resentment against him was the safest mode of revenge that occurred to his cowardly, yet cunning and malignant, disposition.

He brought up on all occasions the story of the challenge which Ravenswood had declined to accept, and endeavoured, by every possible insinuation, to make his patron believe that his honour was concerned in bringing that matter to an issue by a present discussion with Ravenswood. But respecting this subject Bucklaw imposed on him, at length, a peremptory command of silence.

'I think,' he said, 'the Master has treated me unlike a gentleman, and I see no right he had to send me back a cavalier answer when I demanded the satisfaction of one. But he gave me my life once; and, in looking the matter over at present, I put myself but on equal terms with him. Should he cross me again, I shall consider the old accompt as balanced, and his Mastership will do well to look to himself.'

'That he should,' re-echoed Craigengelt; 'for when you are

in practice, Bucklaw, I would bet a magnum you are through him before the third pass.'

'Then you know nothing of the matter,' said Bucklaw, 'and you never saw him fence.'

'And I know nothing of the matter?' said the dependant — 'a good jest, I promise you! And though I never saw Ravenswood fence, have I not been at Monsieur Sagoon's school, who was the first *maître d'armes* at Paris; and have I not been at Signor Poco's at Florence, and Meinherr Durchstossen's at Vienna, and have I not seen all their play?'

'I don't know whether you have or not,' said Bucklaw; 'but what about it, though you had?'

'Only that I will be d—d if ever I saw French, Italian, or High-Dutchman ever make foot, hand, and eye keep time half so well as you, Bucklaw.'

'I believe you lie, Craigie,' said Bucklaw; 'however, I can hold my own, both with single rapier, backsword, sword and dagger, broadsword, or case of falchions — and that 's as much as any gentleman need know of the matter.'

'And the double of what ninety-nine out of a hundred know,' said Craigengelt; 'they learn to change a few thrusts with the small sword, and then, forsooth, they understand the noble art of defence! Now, when I was at Rouen in the year 1695, there was a Chevalier de Chapon and I went to the opera, where we found three bits of English birkies ——'

'Is it a long story you are going to tell?' said Bucklaw, interrupting him without ceremony.

'Just as you like,' answered the parasite, 'for we made short work of it.'

'Then I like it short,' said Bucklaw. 'Is it serious or merry?'

'Devilish serious, I assure you, and so they found it; for the Chevalier and I ——'

'Then I don't like it at all,' said Bucklaw; 'so fill a brimmer of my auld auntie's claret, rest her heart! And, as the Highlandman says, *Skioch doch na skiaill*.'[1]

'That was what tough old Sir Evan Dhu used to say to me when I was out with the metall'd lads in 1689. "Craigengelt," he used to say, "you are as pretty a fellow as ever held steel in his grip, but you have one fault."'

'If he had known you as long as I have done,' said Bucklaw, 'he would have found out some twenty more; but hang long stories, give us your toast, man.'

[1] "Cut a drink with a tale;" equivalent to the English adage of boon companions, "Don't preach over your liquor."

Craigengelt rose, went on tiptoe to the door, peeped out, shut it carefully, came back again, clapped his tarnished gold-laced hat on one side of his head, took his glass in one hand, and touching the hilt of his hanger with the other, named, 'The King over the water.'

'I tell you what it is, Captain Craigengelt,' said Bucklaw; 'I shall keep my mind to myself on these subjects, having too much respect for the memory of my venerable Aunt Girnington to put her lands and tenements in the way of committing treason against established authority. Bring me King James to Edinburgh, Captain, with thirty thousand men at his back, and I'll tell you what I think about his title; but as for running my neck into a noose, and my good broad lands into the statutory penalties, "in that case made and provided," rely upon it, you will find me no such fool. So, when you mean to vapour with your hanger and your dram-cup in support of treasonable toasts, you must find your liquor and company elsewhere.'

'Well, then,' said Craigengelt, 'name the toast yourself, and be it what it like, I'll pledge you, were it a mile to the bottom.'

'And I'll give you a toast that deserves it, my boy,' said Bucklaw; 'what say you to Miss Lucy Ashton?'

'Up with it,' said the Captain, as he tossed off his brimmer, 'the bonniest lass in Lothian! What a pity the old sneckdrawing Whigamore, her father, is about to throw her away upon that rag of pride and beggary, the Master of Ravenswood!'

'That's not quite so clear,' said Bucklaw, in a tone which, though it seemed indifferent, excited his companion's eager curiosity; and not that only, but also his hope of working himself into some sort of confidence, which might make him necessary to his patron, being by no means satisfied to rest on mere sufferance, if he could form by art or industry a more permanent title to his favour.

'I thought,' said he, after a moment's pause, 'that was a settled matter; they are continually together, and nothing else is spoken of betwixt Lammer Law and Traprain.'

'They may say what they please,' replied his patron, 'but I know better; and I'll give you Miss Lucy Ashton's health again, my boy.'

'And I would drink it on my knee,' said Craigengelt, 'if I thought the girl had the spirit to jilt that d—d son of a Spaniard.'

'I am to request you will not use the word "jilt" and Miss Ashton's name together,' said Bucklaw, gravely.

'Jilt, did I say? Discard, my lad of acres — by Jove, I meant to say discard,' replied Craigengelt; 'and I hope she'll discard him like a small card at piquet, and take in the king of hearts, my boy! But yet ——'

'But what?' said his patron.

'But yet I know for certain they are hours together alone, and in the woods and the fields.'

'That's her foolish father's dotage; that will be soon put out of the lass's head, if it ever gets into it,' answered Bucklaw. 'And now fill your glass again, Captain; I am going to make you happy; I am going to let you into a secret — a plot — a noosing plot — only the noose is but typical.'

'A marrying matter?' said Craigengelt, and his jaw fell as he asked the question; for he suspected that matrimony would render his situation at Girnington much more precarious than during the jolly days of his patron's bachelorhood.

'Ay, a marriage, man,' said Bucklaw; 'but wherefore droops thy mighty spirit, and why grow the rubies on thy cheek so pale? The board will have a corner, and the corner will have a trencher, and the trencher will have a glass beside it; and the board-end shall be filled, and the trencher and the glass shall be replenished for thee, if all the petticoats in Lothian had sworn the contrary. What, man! I am not the boy to put myself into leading-strings.'

'So says many an honest fellow,' said Craigengelt, 'and some of my special friends; but, curse me if I know the reason, the women could never bear me, and always contrived to trundle me out of favour before the honeymoon was over.'

'If you could have kept your ground till that was over, you might have made a good year's pension,' said Bucklaw.

'But I never could,' answered the dejected parasite. 'There was my Lord Castle-Cuddy — we were hand and glove: I rode his horses, borrowed money both for him and from him, trained his hawks, and taught him how to lay his bets; and when he took a fancy of marrying, I married him to Katie Glegg, whom I thought myself as sure of as man could be of woman. Egad, she had me out of the house, as if I had run on wheels, within the first fortnight!'

'Well!' replied Bucklaw, 'I think I have nothing of Castle Cuddy about me, or Lucy of Katie Glegg. But you see the thing will go on whether you like it or no; the only question is, will you be useful?'

'Useful!' exclaimed the Captain, 'and to thee, my lad of

lands, my darling boy, whom I would tramp barefooted through the world for! Name time, place, mode, and circumstances, and see it I will not be useful in all uses that can be devised.'

'Why, then, you must ride two hundred miles for me,' said the patron.

'A thousand, and call them a flea's leap,' answered the dependant; 'I'll cause saddle my horse directly.'

'Better stay till you know where you are to go, and what you are to do,' quoth Bucklaw. 'You know I have a kinswoman in Northumberland, Lady Blenkensop by name, whose old acquaintance I had the misfortune to lose in the period of my poverty, but the light of whose countenance shone forth upon me when the sun of my prosperity began to arise.'

'D—n all such double-faced jades!' exclaimed Craigengelt, heroically; 'this I will say for John Craigengelt, that he is his friend's friend through good report and bad report, poverty and riches; and you know something of that yourself, Bucklaw.'

'I have not forgot your merits,' said his patron; 'I do remember that, in my extremities, you had a mind to *crimp* me for the service of the French king, or of the Pretender; and, moreover, that you afterwards lent me a score of pieces, when, as I firmly believe, you had heard the news that old Lady Girnington had a touch of the dead palsy. But don't be downcast, John; I believe after all, you like me very well in your way, and it is my misfortune to have no better counsellor at present. To return to this Lady Blenkensop, you must know, she is a close confederate of Duchess Sarah.'

'What! of Sall Jennings?' exclaimed Craigengelt; 'then she must be a good one.'

'Hold your tongue, and keep your Tory rants to yourself, if it be possible,' said Bucklaw. 'I tell you, that through the Duchess of Marlborough has this Northumbrian cousin of mine become a crony of Lady Ashton, the Keeper's wife, or, I may say, the Lord Keeper's Lady Keeper, and she has favoured Lady Blenkensop with a visit on her return from London, and is just now at her old mansion-house on the banks of the Wansbeck. Now, sir, as it has been the use and wont of these ladies to consider their husbands as of no importance in the management of their own families, it has been their present pleasure, without consulting Sir William Ashton, to put on the tapis a matrimonial alliance, to be concluded between Lucy Ashton and my own right honourable self, Lady Ashton acting as self-constituted plenipotentiary on the part of

her daughter and husband, and Mother Blenkensop, equally unaccredited, doing me the honour to be my representative. You may suppose I was a little astonished when I found that a treaty, in which I was so considerably interested, had advanced a good way before I was even consulted.'

'Capot me! if I think that was according to the rules of the game,' said his confidant; 'and pray, what answer did you return?'

'Why, my first thought was to send the treaty to the devil, and the negotiators along with it, for a couple of meddling old women; my next was to laugh very heartily; and my third and last was a settled opinion that the thing was reasonable, and would suit me well enough.'

'Why, I thought you had never seen the wench but once, and then she had her riding-mask on; I am sure you told me so.'

'Ay, but I liked her very well then. And Ravenswood's dirty usage of me — shutting me out of doors to dine with the lackeys, because he had the Lord Keeper, forsooth, and his daughter, to be guests in his beggarly castle of starvation, — d—m me, Craigengelt, if I ever forgive him till I play him as good a trick!'

'No more you should, if you are a lad of mettle,' said Craigengelt, the matter now taking a turn in which he could sympathise; 'and if you carry this wench from him, it will break his heart.'

'That it will not,' said Bucklaw; 'his heart is all steeled over with reason and philosophy, things that you, Craigie, know nothing about more than myself, God help me. But it will break his pride, though, and that's what I'm driving at.'

'Distance me!' said Craigengelt, 'but I know the reason now of his unmannerly behaviour at his old tumble-down tower yonder. Ashamed of your company? — no, no! Gad, he was afraid you would cut in and carry off the girl.'

'Eh! Craigengelt?' said Bucklaw, 'do you really think so? but no, no! he is a devilish deal prettier man than I am.'

'Who — he?' exclaimed the parasite. 'He's as black as the crook; and for his size — he's a tall fellow, to be sure, but give me a light, stout, middle-sized ——'

'Plague on thee!' said Bucklaw, interrupting him, 'and on me for listening to you! You would say as much if I were hunch-backed. But as to Ravenswood — he has kept no terms with me, I'll keep none with him; if I *can* win this girl from him, I *will* win her.'

'Win her! 'sblood, you *shall* win her, point, quint, and quatorze, my king of trumps; you shall pique, repique, and capot him.'

'Prithee, stop thy gambling cant for one instant,' said Bucklaw. 'Things have come thus far, that I have entertained the proposal of my kinswoman, agreed to the terms of jointure, amount of fortune, and so forth, and that the affair is to go forward when Lady Ashton comes down, for she takes her daughter and her son in her own hand. Now they want me to send up a confidential person with some writings.'

'By this good wine, I'll ride to the end of the world — the very gates of Jericho, and the judgment-seat of Prester John, for thee!' ejaculated the Captain.

'Why, I believe you would do something for me, and a great deal for yourself. Now, any one could carry the writings; but you will have a little more to do. You must contrive to drop out before my Lady Ashton, just as if it were a matter of little consequence, the residence of Ravenswood at her husband's house, and his close intercourse with Miss Ashton; and you may tell her that all the country talks of a visit from the Marquis of A——, as it is supposed, to make up the match betwixt Ravenswood and her daughter. I should like to hear what she says to all this; for, rat me! if I have any idea of starting for the plate at all if Ravenswood is to win the race, and he has odds against me already.'

'Never a bit; the wrench has too much sense, and in that belief I drink her health a third time; and, were time and place fitting, I would drink it on bended knees, and he that would not pledge me, I would make his guts garter his stockings.'

'Hark ye, Craigengelt; as you are going into the society of women of rank,' said Bucklaw, 'I'll thank you to forget your strange blackguard oaths and "damme's." I'll write to them, though, that you are a blunt, untaught fellow.'

'Ay, ay,' replied Craigengelt — 'a plain, blunt, honest, downright soldier.'

'Not too honest, nor too much of the soldier neither; but such as thou art, it is my luck to need thee, for I must have spurs put to Lady Ashton's motions.'

'I'll dash them up to the rowel-heads,' said Craigengelt; 'she shall come here at the gallop, like a cow chased by a whole nest of hornets, and her tail twisted over her rump like a corkscrew.'

'And hear ye, Craigie,' said Bucklaw; 'your boots and doublet are good enough to drink in, as the man says in the play, but they are somewhat too greasy for tea table service; prithee, get thyself a little better rigged out, and here is to pay all charges.'

'Nay, Bucklaw; on my soul, man, you use me ill. However,' added Craigengelt, pocketing the money, 'if you will have me so far indebted to you, I must be conforming.'

'Well, horse and away!' said the patron, 'so soon as you have got your riding livery in trim. You may ride the black crop-ear; and, hark ye, I 'll make you a present of him to boot.'

'I drink to the good luck of my mission,' answered the ambassador, 'in a half-pint bumper.'

'I thank ye, Craigie, and pledge you; I see nothing against it but the father or the girl taking a tantrum, and I am told the mother can wind them both round her little finger. Take care not to affront her with any of your Jacobite jargon.'

'O ay, true — she is a Whig, and a friend of old Sall of Marlborough; thank my stars, I can hoist any colours at a pinch! I have fought as hard under John Churchill as ever I did under Dundee or the Duke of Berwick.

'I verily believe you, Craigie,' said the lord of the mansion; 'but, Craigie, do you, pray, step down to the cellar, and fetch us up a bottle of the Burgundy, 1678; it is in the fourth bin from the right-hand turn. And I say, Craigie, you may fetch up half a dozen whilst you are about it. Egad, we 'll make a night on 't!'

CHAPTER XXII

And soon they spied the merry-men green,
And eke the coach and four.

Duke upon Duke.

CRAIGENGELT set forth on his mission so soon as his equipage was complete, prosecuted his journey with all dilligence, and accomplished his commission with all the dexterity for which Bucklaw had given him credit. As he arrived with credentials from Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, he was extremely welcome to both ladies; and those who are prejudiced in favour of a new acquaintance can, for a time at least, discover excellences in his very faults and perfections in his deficiencies. Although both ladies were accustomed to good society, yet, being predetermined to find out an agreeable and well-behaved gentleman in Mr. Hayston's friend, they succeeded wonderfully in imposing on themselves. It is true that Craigengelt was now handsomely dressed, and that was a point of no small consequence. But, independent of outward show, his blackguard impudence of address was construed into honourable bluntness, becoming his supposed military profession; his hectoring passed for courage, and his sauciness for wit. Lest, however, any one should think this a violation of probability, we must add, in fairness to the two ladies, that their discernment was greatly blinded, and their favour propitiated, by the opportune arrival of Captain Craigengelt in the moment when they were longing for a third hand to make a party at tredrille, in which, as in all games, whether of chance or skill, that worthy person was a great proficient.

When he found himself established in favour, his next point was how best to use it for the furtherance of his patron's view. He found Lady Ashton prepossessed strongly in favour of the motion which Lady Blenkensop, partly from regard to her kinsman, partly from the spirit of match-making, had not

hesitated to propose to her; so that his task was an easy one. Bucklaw, reformed from his prodigality, was just the sort of husband which she desired to have for her Shepherdess of Lammermoor; and while the marriage gave her an easy fortune, and a respectable country gentleman for her husband, Lady Ashton was of opinion that her destinies would be fully and most favourably accomplished. It so chanced, also, that Bucklaw, among his new acquisitions, had gained the management of a little political interest in a neighbouring county, where the Douglas family originally held large possessions. It was one of the bosom-hopes of Lady Ashton that her eldest son, Sholto, should represent this county in the British Parliament, and she saw this alliance with Bucklaw as a circumstance which might be highly favourable to her wishes.

Craigengelt, who, in his way, by no means wanted sagacity, no sooner discovered in what quarter the wind of Lady Ashton's wishes sate, than he trimmed his course accordingly. 'There was little to prevent Bucklaw himself from sitting for the county; he must carry the heat — must walk the course. Two cousins-german, six more distant kinsmen, his factor and his chamberlain, were all hollow votes; and the Girnington interest had always carried, betwixt love and fear, about as many more. But Bucklaw cared no more about riding the first horse, and that sort of thing, than he, Craigengelt, did about a game at birkie: it was a pity his interest was not in good guidance.'

All this Lady Ashton drank in with willing and attentive ears, resolving internally to be herself the person who should take the management of the political influence of her destined son-in-law, for the benefit of her eldest-born, Sholto, and all other parties concerned.

When he found her ladyship thus favourably disposed, the Captain proceeded, to use his employer's phrase, to set spurs to her resolution, by hinting at the situation of matters at Ravenswood Castle, the long residence which the heir of that family had made with the Lord Keeper, and the reports which — though he would be d—d ere he gave credit to any of them — had been idly circulated in the neighbourhood. It was not the Captain's cue to appear himself to be uneasy on the subject of these rumours; but he easily saw from Lady Ashton's flushed cheek, hesitating voice, and flashing eye, that she had caught the alarm which he intended to communicate. She had not heard from her husband so often or so regularly as she thought him bound in duty to have written, and of this very interesting

intelligence concerning his visit to the Tower of Wolf's Crag, and the guest whom, with such cordiality, he had received at Ravenswood Castle, he had suffered his lady to remain altogether ignorant, until she now learned it by the chance information of a stranger. Such concealment approached, in her apprehension, to a misprision, at least, of treason, if not to actual rebellion against her matrimonial authority; and in her inward soul did she vow to take vengeance on the Lord Keeper, as on a subject detected in meditating revolt. Her indignation burned the more fiercely as she found herself obliged to suppress it in presence of Lady Blenkensop, the kinswoman, and of Craigengelt, the confidential friend, of Bucklaw, of whose alliance she now became trebly desirous, since it occurred to her alarmed imagination that her husband might, in his policy or timidity, prefer that of Ravenswood.

The Captain was engineer enough to discover that the train was fired; and therefore heard, in the course of the same day, without the least surprise, that Lady Ashton had resolved to abridge her visit to Lady Blenkensop, and set forth with the peep of morning on her return to Scotland, using all the despatch which the state of the roads and the mode of travelling would possibly permit.

Unhappy Lord Keeper! little was he aware what a storm was travelling towards him in all the speed with which an old-fashioned coach and six could possibly achieve its journey. He, like Don Gayferos, 'forgot his lady fair and true,' and was only anxious about the expected visit of the Marquis of A——. Soothfast tidings had assured him that this nobleman was at length, and without fail, to honour his castle at one in the afternoon, being a late dinner-hour; and much was the bustle in consequence of the annunciation. The Lord Keeper traversed the chambers, held consultation with the butler in the cellars, and even ventured, at the risk of a *démêlé* with a cook of a spirit lofty enough to scorn the admonitions of Lady Ashton herself, to peep into the kitchen. Satisfied, at length, that everything was in as active a train of preparation as was possible, he summoned Ravenswood and his daughter to walk upon the terrace, for the purpose of watching, from that commanding position, the earliest symptoms of his lordship's approach. For this purpose, with slow and idle step, he paraded the terrace, which, flanked with a heavy stone battlement, stretched in front of the castle upon a level with the first story; while visitors found access to the court by a projecting gateway, the bartizan

or flat-leaded roof of which was accessible from the terrace by an easy flight of low and broad steps. The whole bore a resemblance partly to a castle, partly to a nobleman's seat; and though calculated, in some respects, for defence, evinced that it had been constructed under a sense of the power and security of the ancient Lords of Ravenswood.

This pleasant walk commanded a beautiful and extensive view. But what was most to our present purpose, there were seen from the terrace two roads, one leading from the east, and one from the westward, which, crossing a ridge opposed to the eminence on which the castle stood, at different angles, gradually approached each other, until they joined not far from the gate of the avenue. It was to the westward approach that the Lord Keeper, from a sort of fidgeting anxiety, his daughter, from complaisance to him, and Ravenswood, though feeling some symptoms of internal impatience, out of complaisance to his daughter, directed their eyes to see the precursors of the Marquis's approach.

These were not long of presenting themselves. Two running footmen, dressed in white, with black jockey-caps, and long staffs in their hands, headed the train; and such was their agility, that they found no difficulty in keeping the necessary advance, which the etiquette of their station required, before the carriage and horsemen. Onward they came at a long swinging trot, arguing unwearied speed in their long-breathed calling. Such running footmen are often alluded to in old plays (I would particularly instance Middleton's *Mad World, my Masters*), and perhaps may be still remembered by some old persons in Scotland, as part of the retinue of the ancient nobility when travelling in full ceremony.[1] Behind these glancing meteors, who footed it as if the Avenger of Blood had been behind them, came a cloud of dust, raised by riders who preceded, attended, or followed the state-carriage of the Marquis.

The privilege of nobility, in those days, had something in it impressive on the imagination. The dresses and liveries and number of their attendants, their style of travelling, the imposing, and almost warlike, air of the armed men who surrounded them, placed them far above the laird, who travelled with his brace of footmen; and as to rivalry from the mercantile part of the community, these would as soon have thought of imitating the state equipage of the Sovereign. At present it is different; and I myself, Peter Pattieson, in a late journey to

[1] See Note 9.

Edinburgh, had the honour, in the mail coach phrase, to 'change a leg' with a peer of the realm. It was not so in the days of which I write; and the Marquis's approach, so long expected in vain, now took place in the full pomp of ancient aristocracy. Sir William Ashton was so much interested in what he beheld, and in considering the ceremonial of reception, in case any circumstance had been omitted, that he scarce heard his son Henry exclaim, 'There is another coach and six coming down the east road, papa; can they both belong to the Marquis of A——?'

At length, when the youngster had fairly compelled his attention by pulling his sleeve,

> He turned his eyes, and, as he turn'd, survey'd
> An awful vision.

Sure enough, another coach and six, with four servants or outriders in attendance, was descending the hill from the eastward, at such a pace as made it doubtful which of the carriages thus approaching from different quarters would first reach the gate at the extremity of the avenue. The one coach was green, the other blue; and not the green and blue chariots in the circus of Rome or Constantinople excited more turmoil among the citizens than the double apparition occasioned in the mind of the Lord Keeper.

We all remember the terrible exclamation of the dying profligate, when a friend, to destroy what he supposed the hypochondriac idea of a spectre appearing in a certain shape at a given hour, placed before him a person dressed up in the manner he described. '*Mon Dieu!*' said the expiring sinner, who, it seems, saw both the real and polygraphic apparition, '*il y en a deux!*' The surprise of the Lord Keeper was scarcely less unpleasing at the duplication of the expected arrival; his mind misgave him strangely. There was no neighbour who would have approached so unceremoniously, at a time when ceremony was held in such respect. It must be Lady Ashton, said his conscience, and followed up the hint with an anxious anticipation of the purpose of her sudden and unannounced return. He felt that he was caught 'in the manner.' That the company in which she had so unluckily surprised him was likely to be highly distasteful to her, there was no question; and the only hope which remained for him was her high sense of dignified propriety, which, he trusted, might prevent a public explosion. But so active were his doubts and fears as altogether

to derange his purposed ceremonial for the reception of the Marquis.

These feelings of apprehension were not confined to Sir William Ashton. 'It is my mother — it is my mother!' said Lucy, turning as pale as ashes, and clasping her hands together as she looked at Ravenswood.

'And if it be Lady Ashton,' said her lover to her in a low tone, 'what can be the occasion of such alarm? Surely the return of a lady to the family from which she has been so long absent should excite other sensations than those of fear and dismay.'

'You do not know my mother,' said Miss Ashton, in a tone almost breathless with terror; 'what will she say when she sees you in this place!'

'My stay has been too long,' said Ravenswood, somewhat haughtily, 'if her displeasure at my presence is likely to be so formidable. My dear Lucy,' he resumed, in a tone of soothing encouragement, 'you are too childishly afraid of Lady Ashton; she is a woman of family — a lady of fashion — a person who must know the world, and what is due to her husband and her husband's guests.'

Lucy shook her head, and, as if her mother, still at the distance of half a mile, could have seen and scrutinised her deportment, she withdrew herself from beside Ravenswood, and, taking her brother Henry's arm, led him to a different part of the terrace. The Keeper also shuffled down towards the portal of the great gate, without inviting Ravenswood to accompany him; and thus he remained standing alone on the terrace, deserted and shunned, as it were, by the inhabitants of the mansion.

This suited not the mood of one who was proud in proportion to his poverty, and who thought that, in sacrificing deep-rooted resentments so far as to become Sir William's guest, he conferred a favour, and received none. 'But Lucy,' he said to himself; 'she is young, timid, and [illegible] of an important engagement assumed without her [illegible] sanction; yet she should remember with whom [illegible] assumed, and leave me no reason to suspect that she [illegible] of her choice. For the Keeper, sense, spirit, and expression seem to have left his face and manner since he had the first glimpse of Lady Ashton's carriage. I must watch how this is to end; and, if they give me reason to think myself an unwelcome guest, my visit is soon abridged.'

With these suspicions floating on his mind, he left the terrace,

and, walking towards the stables of the castle, gave directions that his horse should be kept in readiness, in case he should have occasion to ride abroad.

In the meanwhile, the drivers of the two carriages, the approach of which had occasioned so much disturbance at the castle, had become aware of each other's presence, as they approached upon different lines to the head of the avenue, as a common centre. Lady Ashton's driver and postilions instantly received orders to get foremost, if possible, her ladyship being desirous of despatching her first interview with her husband before the arrival of these guests, whoever they might happen to be. On the other hand, the coachman of the Marquis, conscious of his own dignity and that of his master, and observing the rival charioteer was mending his pace, resolved, like a true brother of the whip, whether ancient or modern, to vindicate his right of precedence. So that, to increase the confusion of the Lord Keeper's understanding, he saw the short time which remained for consideration abridged by the haste of the contending coachmen, who, fixing their eyes sternly on each other and applying the lash smartly to their horses, began to thunder down the descent with emulous rapidity, while the horsemen who attended them were forced to put on to a hand-gallop.

Sir William's only chance now remaining was the possibility of an overturn, and that his lady or visitor might break their necks. I am not aware that he formed any distinct wish on the subject, but I have no reason to think that his grief in either case would have been altogether inconsolable. This chance, however, also disappeared; for Lady Ashton, though insensible to fear, began to see the ridicule of running a race with a visitor of distinction, the goal being the portal of her own castle, and commanded her coachman, as they approached the avenue, to slacken his pace, and allow precedence to the stranger's equipage; a command which he gladly obeyed, as coming in time to save his honour, the horses of the Marquis's carriage being better, or, at least, fresher than his own. He restrained his pace, therefore, and suffered the green coach to enter the avenue, with all its retinue, which pass it occupied with the speed of a whirlwind. The Marquis's laced charioteer no sooner found the *pas d'avance* was granted to him than he resumed a more deliberate pace, at which he advanced under the embowering shade of the lofty elms, surrounded by all the attendants; while the carriage of Lady Ashton followed, still more slowly, at some distance.

In the front of the castle, and beneath the portal which admitted guests into the inner court, stood Sir William Ashton, much perplexed in mind, his younger son and daughter beside him, and in their rear a train of attendants of various ranks, in and out of livery. The nobility and gentry of Scotland, at this period, were remarkable even to extravagance for the number of their servants, whose services were easily purchased in a country where men were numerous beyond proportion to the means of employing them.

The manners of a man trained like Sir William Ashton are too much at his command to remain long disconcerted with the most adverse concurrence of circumstances. He received the Marquis, as he alighted from his equipage, with the usual compliments of welcome; and, as he ushered him into the great hall, expressed his hope that his journey had been pleasant. The Marquis was a tall, well-made man, with a thoughtful and intelligent countenance, and an eye in which the fire of ambition had for some years replaced the vivacity of youth; a bold, proud expression of countenance, yet chastened by habitual caution, and the desire which, as the head of a party, he necessarily entertained of acquiring popularity. He answered with courtesy the courteous inquiries of the Lord Keeper, and was formally presented to Miss Ashton, in the course of which ceremony the Lord Keeper gave the first symptom of what was chiefly occupying his mind, by introducing his daughter as 'his wife, Lady Ashton.'

Lucy blushed; the Marquis looked surprised at the extremely juvenile appearance of his hostess, and the Lord Keeper with difficulty rallied himself so far as to explain. 'I should have said my daughter, my lord; but the truth is, that I saw Lady Ashton's carriage enter the avenue shortly after your lordship's, and ——'

'Make no apology, my lord,' replied his noble guest; 'let me entreat you will wait on your lady, and leave me to cultivate Miss Ashton's acquaintance. I am shocked my people should have taken precedence of our hostess at her own gate, but your lordship is aware that I supposed Lady Ashton was still in the south. Permit me to beseech you will waive ceremony, and hasten to welcome her.'

This was precisely what the Lord Keeper longed to do; and he instantly profited by his lordship's obliging permission. To see Lady Ashton, and encounter the first burst of her displeasure in private, might prepare her, in some degree, to receive her

unwelcome guests with due decorum. As her carriage, therefore, stopped, the arm of the attentive husband was ready to assist Lady Ashton in dismounting. Looking as if she saw him not, she put his arm aside, and requested that of Captain Craigengelt, who stood by the coach with his laced hat under his arm, having acted as *cavalière servente*, or squire in attendance, during the journey. Taking hold of this respectable person's arm as if to support her, Lady Ashton traversed the court, uttering a word or two by way of direction to the servants, but not one to Sir William, who in vain endeavoured to attract her attention, as he rather followed than accompanied her into the hall, in which they found the Marquis in close conversation with the Master of Ravenswood. Lucy had taken the first opportunity of escaping. There was embarrassment in every countenance except that of the Marquis of A——; for even Craigengelt's impudence was hardly able to veil his fear of Ravenswood, and the rest felt the awkwardness of the position in which they were thus unexpectedly placed.

After waiting a moment to be presented by Sir William Ashton, the Marquis resolved to introduce himself. 'The Lord Keeper,' he said, bowing to Lady Ashton, 'has just introduced to me his daughter as his wife; he might very easily present Lady Ashton as his daughter, so little does she differ from what I remember her some years since. Will she permit an old acquaintance the privilege of a guest?'

He saluted the lady with too good a grace to apprehend a repulse, and then proceeded — 'This, Lady Ashton, is a peace-making visit, and therefore I presume to introduce my cousin, the young Master of Ravenswood, to your favourable notice.'

Lady Ashton could not choose but courtesy; but there was in her obeisance an air of haughtiness approaching to contemptuous repulse. Ravenswood could not choose but bow; but his manner returned the scorn with which he had been greeted.

'Allow me,' she said, 'to present to your lordship *my* friend.' Craigengelt, with the forward impudence which men of his cast mistake for ease, made a sliding bow to the Marquis, which he graced by a flourish of his gold-laced hat. The lady turned to her husband. 'You and I, Sir William,' she said, and these were the first words she had addressed to him, 'have acquired new acquaintances since we parted; let me introduce the acquisition I have made to mine — Captain Craigengelt.'

Another bow, and another flourish of the gold-laced hat, which was returned by the Lord Keeper without intimation of

former recognition, and with that sort of anxious readiness which intimated his wish that peace and amnesty should take place betwixt the contending parties, including the auxiliaries on both sides. 'Let me introduce you to the Master of Ravenswood,' said he to Captain Craigengelt, following up the same amicable system.

But the Master drew up his tall form to the full extent of his height, and without so much as looking towards the person thus introduced to him, he said, in a marked tone, 'Captain Craigengelt and I are already perfectly well acquainted with each other.'

'Perfectly — perfectly,' replied the Captain, in a mumbling tone, like that of a double echo, and with a flourish of his hat, the circumference of which was greatly abridged, compared with those which had so cordially graced his introduction to the Marquis and the Lord Keeper.

Lockhard, followed by three menials, now entered with wine and refreshments, which it was the fashion to offer as a whet before dinner; and when they were placed before the guests, Lady Ashton made an apology for withdrawing her husband from them for some minutes upon business of special import. The Marquis, of course, requested her ladyship would lay herself under no restraint; and Craigengelt, bolting with speed a second glass of racy canary, hastened to leave the room, feeling no great pleasure in the prospect of being left alone with the Marquis of A—— and the Master of Ravenswood; the presence of the former holding him in awe, and that of the latter in bodily terror.

Some arrangements about his horse and baggage formed the pretext for his sudden retreat, in which he persevered, although Lady Ashton gave Lockhard orders to be careful most particularly to accommodate Captain Craigengelt with all the attendance which he could possibly require. The Marquis and the Master of Ravenswood were thus left to communicate to each other their remarks upon the reception which they had met with, while Lady Ashton led the way, and her lord followed somewhat like a condemned criminal, to her ladyship's dressing-room.

So soon as the spouses had both entered, her ladyship gave way to that fierce audacity of temper which she had with difficulty suppressed, out of respect to appearances. She shut the door behind the alarmed Lord Keeper, took the key out of the spring-lock, and with a countenance which years had not bereft of its haughty charms, and eyes which spoke at once resolution and resentment, she addressed her astounded husband

in these words: 'My lord, I am not greatly surprised at the connexions you have been pleased to form during my absence, they are entirely in conformity with your birth and breeding; and if I did expect anything else, I heartily own my error, and that I merit, by having done so, the disappointment you had prepared for me.'

'My dear Lady Ashton — my dear Eleanor,' said the Lord Keeper, 'listen to reason for a moment, and I will convince you I have acted with all the regard due to the dignity, as well as the interest, of my family.'

'To the interest of *your* family I conceive you perfectly capable of attending,' returned the indignant lady, 'and even to the dignity of your own family also, as far as it requires any looking after. But as mine happens to be inextricably involved with it, you will excuse me if I choose to give my own attention to it as far as that is concerned.'

'What would you have, Lady Ashton?' said the husband. 'What is it that displeases you? Why is it that, on your return after so long an absence, I am arraigned in this manner?'

'Ask your own conscience, Sir William, what has prompted you to become a renegade to your political party and opinions, and led you, for what I know, to be on the point of marrying your only daughter to a beggarly Jacobite bankrupt, the inveterate enemy of your family to the boot.'

'Why, what, in the name of common sense and civility, would you have me do, madam?' answered her husband. 'Is it possible for me, with ordinary decency, to turn a young gentleman out of my house, who saved my daughter's life and my own, but the other morning, as it were?'

'Saved your life! I have heard of that story,' said the lady. 'The Lord Keeper was scared by a dun cow, and he takes the young fellow who killed her for Guy of Warwick: any butcher from Haddington may soon have an equal claim on your hospitality.'

'Lady Ashton,' stammered the Keeper, 'this is intolerable; and when I am desirous, too, to make you easy by any sacrifice, if you would but tell me what you would be at.'

'Go down to your guests,' said the imperious dame, 'and make your apology to Ravenswood, that the arrival of Captain Craigengelt and some other friends renders it impossible for you to offer him lodgings at the castle. I expect young Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw.'

'Good heavens, madam!' ejaculated her husband. 'Ravens

wood to give place to Craigengelt, a common gambler and an informer! It was all I could do to forbear desiring the fellow to get out of my house, and I was much surprised to see him in your ladyship's train.'

'Since you saw him there, you might be well assured,' answered this meek helpmate, 'that he was proper society. As to this Ravenswood, he only meets with the treatment which, to my certain knowledge, he gave to a much-valued friend of mine, who had the misfortune to be his guest some time since. But take your resolution; for, if Ravenswood does not quit the house, I will.'

Sir William Ashton paced up and down the apartment in the most distressing agitation; fear, and shame, and anger contending against the habitual deference he was in the use of rendering to his lady. At length it ended, as is usual with timid minds placed in such circumstances, in his adopting a *mezzo termine* — a middle measure.

'I tell you frankly, madam, I neither can nor will be guilty of the incivility you propose to the Master of Ravenswood; he has not deserved it at my hand. If you will be so unreasonable as to insult a man of quality under your own roof, I cannot prevent you; but I will not at least be the agent in such a preposterous proceeding.'

'You will not?' asked the lady.

'No, by heavens, madam!' her husband replied; 'ask me anything congruent with common decency, as to drop his acquaintance by degrees, or the like; but to bid him leave my house is what I will not and cannot consent to.'

'Then the task of supporting the honour of the family will fall on me, as it has often done before,' said the lady.

She sat down, and hastily wrote a few lines. The Lord Keeper made another effort to prevent her taking a step so decisive, just as she opened the door to call her female attendant from the ante-room. 'Think what you are doing, Lady Ashton: you are making a mortal enemy of a young man who is like to have the means of harming us——'

'Did you ever know a Douglas who feared an enemy?' answered the lady, contemptuously.

'Ay, but he is as proud and vindictive as a hundred Douglasses, and a hundred devils to boot. Think of it for a night only.'

'Not for another moment,' answered the lady. 'Here, Mrs. Patullo, give this billet to young Ravenswood.'

'To the Master, madam?' said Mrs. Patullo.

'Ay, to the Master, if you call him so.'

'I wash my hands of it entirely,' said the Keeper; 'and I shall go down into the garden and see that Jardine gathers the winter fruit for the desert.'

'Do so,' said the lady, looking after him with glances of infinite contempt; 'and thank God that you leave one behind you as fit to protect the honour of the family as you are to look after pippins and pears.'

The Lord Keeper remained long enough in the garden to give her ladyship's mind time to explode, and to let, as he thought, at least the first violence of Ravenswood's displeasure blow over. When he entered the hall, he found the Marquis of A——giving orders to some of his attendants. He seemed in high displeasure, and interrupted an apology which Sir William had commenced for having left his lordship alone.

'I presume, Sir William, you are no stranger to this singular billet with which *my* kinsman of Ravenswood (an emphasis on the word 'my') has been favoured by your lady; and, of course, that you are prepared to receive my adieus. My kinsman is already gone, having thought it unnecessary to offer any on his part, since all former civilities had been cancelled by this singular insult.'

'I protest, my lord,' said Sir William, holding the billet in his hand, 'I am not privy to the contents of this letter. I know Lady Ashton is a warm-tempered and prejudiced woman, and I am sincerely sorry for any offence that has been given or taken; but I hope your lordship will consider that a lady ——'

'Should bear herself towards persons of a certain rank with the breeding of one,' said the Marquis, completing the half-uttered sentence.

'True, my lord,' said the unfortunate Keeper; 'but Lady Ashton is still a woman ——'

'And as such, methinks,' said the Marquis, again interrupting him, 'should be taught the duties which correspond to her station. But here she comes, and I will learn from her own mouth the reason of this extraordinary and unexpected affront offered to my near relation, while both he and I were her ladyship's guests.'

Lady Ashton accordingly entered the apartment at this moment. Her dispute with Sir William, and a subsequent interview with her daughter, had not prevented her from attending to the duties of her toilette. She appeared in full

dress; and, from the character of her countenance and manner, well became the splendour with which ladies of quality then appeared on such occasions.

The Marquis of A—— bowed haughtily, and she returned the salute with equal pride and distance of demeanour. He then took from the passive hand of Sir William Ashton the billet he had given him the moment before he approached the lady, and was about to speak, when she interrupted him. 'I perceive, my lord, you are about to enter upon an unpleasant subject. I am sorry any such should have occurred at this time, to interrupt in the slightest degree the respectful reception due to your lordship; but so it is. Mr. Edgar Ravenswood, for whom I have addressed the billet in your lordship's hand, has abused the hospitality of this family, and Sir William Ashton's softness of temper, in order to seduce a young person into engagements without her parents' consent, and of which they never can approve.'

Both gentlemen answered at once. 'My kinsman is incapable ——' said the Lord Marquis.

'I am confident that my daughter Lucy is still more incapable ——' said the Lord Keeper.

Lady Ashton at once interrupted and replied to them both. —'My Lord Marquis, your kinsman, if Mr. Ravenswood has the honour to be so, has made the attempt privately to secure the affections of this young and inexperienced girl. Sir William Ashton, your daughter has been simple enough to give more encouragement than she ought to have done to so very improper a suitor.'

'And I think, madam,' said the Lord Keeper, losing his accustomed temper and patience, 'that if you had nothing better to tell us, you had better have kept this family secret to yourself also.'

'You will pardon me, Sir William,' said the lady, calmly: 'the noble Marquis has a right to know the cause of the treatment I have found it necessary to use to a gentleman whom he calls his blood-relation.'

'It is a cause,' muttered the Lord Keeper, 'which has emerged since the effect has taken place; for, if it exists at all, I am sure she knew nothing of it when her letter to Ravenswood was written.'

'It is the first time that I have heard of this,' said the Marquis; 'but, since your ladyship has tabled a subject so delicate, permit me to say, that my kinsman's birth and con

nexions entitled him to a patient hearing, and at least a civil refusal, even in case of his being so ambitious as to raise his eyes to the daughter of Sir William Ashton.'

'You will recollect, my lord, of what blood Miss Lucy Ashton is come by the mother's side,' said the lady.

'I do remember your descent — from a younger branch of the house of Angus,' said the Marquis; 'and your ladyship — forgive me, lady — ought not to forget that the Ravenswoods have thrice intermarried with the main stem. Come, madam, I know how matters stand — old and long-fostered prejudices are difficult to get over, I make every allowance for them; I ought not, and I would not, otherwise have suffered my kinsman to depart alone, expelled, in a manner, from this house, but I had hopes of being a mediator. I am still unwilling to leave you in anger, and shall not set forward till after noon, as I rejoin the Master of Ravenswood upon the road a few miles from hence. Let us talk over this matter more coolly.'

'It is what I anxiously desire, my lord,' said Sir William Ashton, eagerly. 'Lady Ashton, we will not permit my Lord of A —— to leave us in displeasure. We must compel him to tarry dinner at the castle.'

'The castle,' said the lady, 'and all that it contains, are at the command of the Marquis, so long as he chooses to honour it with his residence; but touching the farther discussion of this disagreeable topic ——'

'Pardon me, good madam,' said the Marquis; 'but I cannot allow you to express any hasty resolution on a subject so important. I see that more company is arriving; and, since I have the good fortune to renew my former acquaintance with Lady Ashton, I hope she will give me leave to avoid perilling what I prize so highly upon any disagreeable subject of discussion — at least till we have talked over more pleasant topics.'

The lady smiled, courtesied, and gave her hand to the Marquis, by whom, with all the formal gallantry of the time, which did not permit the guest to tuck the lady of the house under the arm, as a rustic does his sweetheart at a wake, she was ushered to the eating-room.

Here they were joined by Bucklaw, Craigengelt, and other neighbours, whom the Lord Keeper had previously invited to meet the Marquis of A——. An apology, founded upon a slight indisposition, was alleged as an excuse for the absence of Miss Ashton, whose seat appeared unoccupied. The entertainment was splendid to profusion, and was protracted till a late hour.

CHAPTER XXIII

Such was our fallen father's fate,
Yet better than mine own;
He shared his exile with his mate,
I'm banish'd forth alone.

WALLER.

I WILL not attempt to describe the mixture of indignation and regret with which Ravenswood left the seat which had belonged to his ancestors. The terms in which Lady Ashton's billet was couched rendered it impossible for him, without being deficient in that spirit of which he perhaps had too much, to remain an instant longer within its walls. The Marquis, who had his share in the affront, was, nevertheless, still willing to make some efforts at conciliation. He therefore suffered his kinsman to depart alone, making him promise, however, that he would wait for him at the small inn called the Tod's Hole, situated, as our readers may be pleased to recollect, half way betwixt Ravenswood Castle and Wolf's Crag, and about five Scottish miles distant from each. Here the Marquis proposed to join the Master of Ravenswood, either that night or the next morning. His own feelings would have induced him to have left the castle directly, but he was loth to forfeit, without at least one effort, the advantages which he had proposed from his visit to the Lord Keeper; and the Master of Ravenswood was, even in the very heat of his resentment, unwilling to foreclose any chance of reconciliation which might arise out of the partiality which Sir William Ashton had shown towards him, as well as the intercessory arguments of his noble kinsman. He himself departed without a moment's delay, farther than was necessary to make this arrangement.

At first he spurred his horse at a quick pace through an avenue of the park, as if, by rapidity of motion, he could stupify the confusion of feelings with which he was assailed. But as the road grew wilder and more sequestered, and when

the trees had hidden the turrets of the castle, he gradually slackened his pace, as if to indulge the painful reflections which he had in vain endeavoured to repress. The path in which he found himself led him to the Mermaiden's Fountain, and to the cottage of Alice; and the fatal influence which superstitious belief attached to the former spot, as well as the admonitions which had been in vain offered to him by the inhabitant of the latter, forced themselves upon his memory. 'Old saws speak truth,' he said to himself, 'and the Mermaiden's Well has indeed witnessed the last act of rashness of the heir of Ravenswood. Alice spoke well,' he continued, 'and I am in the situation which she foretold; or rather, I am more deeply dishonoured – not the dependant and ally of the destroyer of my father's house, as the old sibyl presaged, but the degraded wretch who has aspired to hold that subordinate character, and has been rejected with disdain.'

We are bound to tell the tale as we have received it; and, considering the distance of the time, and propensity of those through whose mouths it has passed to the marvellous, this could not be called a Scottish story unless it manifested a tinge of Scottish superstition. As Ravenswood approached the solitary fountain, he is said to have met with the following singular adventure: – His horse, which was moving slowly forward, suddenly interrupted its steady and composed pace, snorted, reared, and, though urged by the spur, refused to proceed, as if some object of terror had suddenly presented itself. On looking to the fountain, Ravenswood discerned a female figure, dressed in a white, or rather greyish, mantle, placed on the very spot on which Lucy Ashton had reclined while listening to the fatal tale of love. His immediate impression was that she had conjectured by which path he would traverse the park on his departure, and placed herself at this well-known and sequestered place of rendezvous, to indulge her own sorrow and his in a parting interview. In this belief he jumped from his horse, and, making its bridle fast to a tree, walked hastily towards the fountain, pronouncing eagerly, yet under his breath, the words, 'Miss Ashton! – Lucy!'

The figure turned as he addressed it, and discovered to his wondering eyes the features, not of Lucy Ashton, but of old blind Alice. The singularity of her dress, which rather resembled a shroud than the garment of a living woman; the appearance of her person, larger, as it struck him, than it usually seemed to be; above all, the strange circumstance

of a blind, infirm, and decrepit person being found alone and at a distance from her habitation (considerable, if her infirmities be taken into account), combined to impress him with a feeling of wonder approaching to fear. As he approached, she arose slowly from her seat, held her shrivelled hand up as if to prevent his coming more near, and her withered lips moved fast, although no sound issued from them. Ravenswood stopped; and as, after a moment's pause, he again advanced towards her, Alice, or her apparition, moved or glided backwards towards the wicket, still keeping her face turned towards him. The trees soon hid the form from his sight; and, yielding to the strong and terrific impression that the being which he had seen was not of this world, the Master of Ravenswood remained rooted to the ground whereon he had stood when he caught his last view of her. At length, summoning up his courage, he advanced to the spot on which the figure had seemed to be seated; but neither was there pressure of the grass nor any other circumstance to induce him to believe that what he had seen was real and substantial.

Full of those strange thoughts and confused apprehensions which awake in the bosom of one who conceives he has witnessed some preternatural appearance, the Master of Ravenswood walked back towards his horse, frequently, however, looking behind him, not without apprehension, as if expecting that the vision would reappear. But the apparition, whether it was real or whether it was the creation of a heated and agitated imagination, returned not again; and he found his horse sweating and terrified, as if experiencing that agony of fear with which the presence of a supernatural being is supposed to agitate the brute creation. The Master mounted, and rode slowly forward, soothing his steed from time to time, while the animal seemed internally to shrink and shudder, as if expecting some new object of fear at the opening of every glade. The rider, after a moment's consideration, resolved to investigate the matter farther. 'Can my eyes have deceived me,' he said, 'and deceived me for such a space of time? Or are this woman's infirmities but feigned, in order to excite compassion? And even then, her motion resembled not that of a living and existing person. Must I adopt the popular creed, and think that the unhappy being has formed a league with the powers of darkness? I am determined to be resolved: I will not brook imposition even from my own eyes.'

In this uncertainty he rode up to the little wicket of Alice's

garden. Her seat beneath the birch-tree was vacant, though the day was pleasant and the sun was high. He approached the hut, and heard from within the sobs and wailing of a female. No answer was returned when he knocked, so that, after a moment's pause, he lifted the latch and entered. It was indeed a house of solitude and sorrow. Stretched upon her miserable pallet lay the corpse of the last retainer of the house of Ravenswood who still abode on their paternal domains! Life had but shortly departed; and the little girl by whom she had been attended in her last moments was wringing her hands and sobbing, betwixt childish fear and sorrow, over the body of her mistress.

The Master of Ravenswood had some difficulty to compose the terrors of the poor child, whom his unexpected appearance had at first rather appalled than comforted; and when he succeeded, the first expression which the girl used intimated that 'he had come too late.' Upon inquiring the meaning of this expression, he learned that the deceased, upon the first attack of the mortal agony, had sent a peasant to the castle to beseech an interview of the Master of Ravenswood, and had expressed the utmost impatience for his return. But the messengers of the poor are tardy and negligent: the fellow had not reached the castle, as was afterwards learned, until Ravenswood had left it, and had then found too much amusement among the retinue of the strangers to return in any haste to the cottage of Alice. Meantime her anxiety of mind seemed to increase with the agony of her body; and, to use the phrase of Babie, her only attendant, 'she prayed powerfully that she might see her master's son once more, and renew her warning.' She died just as the clock in the distant village tolled one; and Ravenswood remembered, with internal shudderings, that he had heard the chime sound through the wood just before he had seen what he was now much disposed to consider as the spectre of the deceased.

It was necessary, as well from his respect to the departed as in common humanity to her terrified attendant, that he should take some measures to relieve the girl from her distressing situation. The deceased, he understood, had expressed a desire to be buried in a solitary churchyard, near the little inn of the Tod's Hole, called the Hermitage, or more commonly Armitage, in which lay interred some of the Ravenswood family, and many of their followers. Ravenswood conceived it his duty to gratify this predilection, so commonly found to exist among

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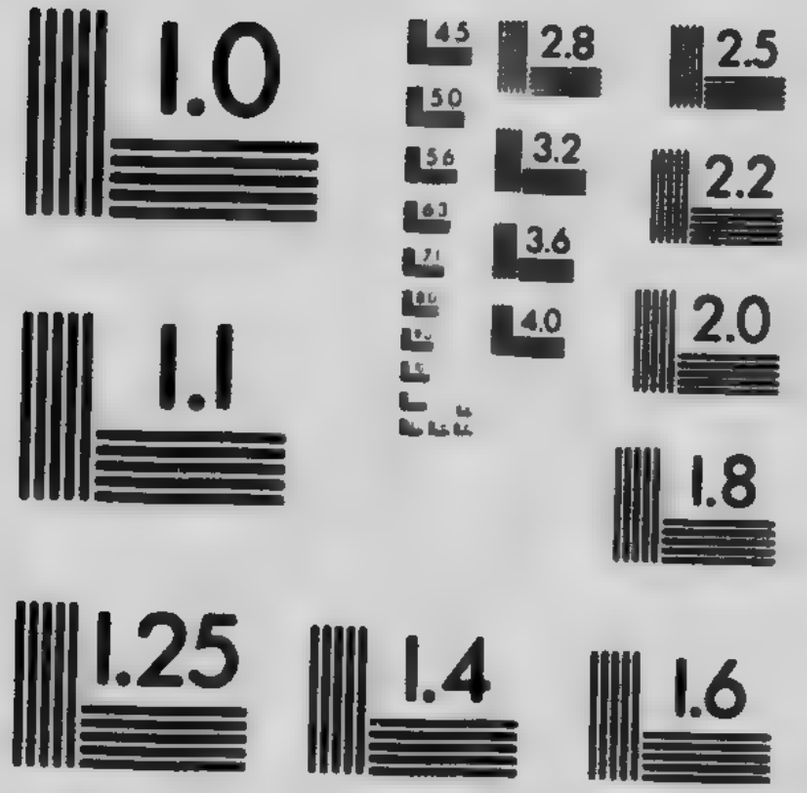

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the Scottish peasantry, and despatched Babie to the neighbouring village to procure the assistance of some females, assuring her that, in the meanwhile, he would himself remain with the dead body, which, as in Thessaly of old, it is accounted highly unfit to leave without a watch.

Thus, in the course of a quarter of an hour or little more, he found himself sitting a solitary guard over the inanimate corpse of her whose dismissed spirit, unless his eyes had strangely deceived him, had so recently manifested itself before him. Notwithstanding his natural courage, the Master was considerably affected by a concurrence of circumstances so extraordinary. 'She died expressing her eager desire to see me. Can it be, then,' was his natural course of reflection 'can strong and earnest wishes, formed during the last agony of nature, survive its catastrophe, surmount the awful bounds of the spiritual world, and place before us its inhabitants in the hues and colouring of life? And why was that manifested to the eye which could not unfold its tale to the ear? and wherefore should a breach be made in the laws of nature, yet its purpose remain unknown? Vain questions, which only death, when it shall make me like the pale and withered form before me, can ever resolve.'

He laid a cloth, as he spoke, over the lifeless face, upon whose features he felt unwilling any longer to dwell. He then took his place in an old carved oaken chair, ornamented with his own armorial bearings, which Alice had contrived to appropriate to her own use in the pillage which took place among creditors, officers, domestics, and messengers of the law when his father left Ravenswood Castle for the last time. Thus seated, he banished, as much as he could, the superstitious feelings which the late incident naturally inspired. His own were sad enough, without the exaggeration of supernatural terror, since he found himself transferred from the situation of a successful lover of Lucy Ashton, and an honoured and respected friend of her father, into the melancholy and solitary guardian of the abandoned and forsaken corpse of a common pauper.

He was relieved, however, from his sad office sooner than he could reasonably have expected, considering the distance betwixt the hut of the deceased and the village, and the age and infirmities of three old women who came from thence, in military phrase, to relieve guard upon the body of the defunct. On any other occasion the speed of these reverend sibyls would

have been much more moderate, for the first was eighty years of age and upwards, the second was paralytic, and the third lame of a leg from some accident. But the burial duties rendered to the deceased are, to the Scottish peasant of either sex, a labour of love. I know not whether it is from the temper of the people, grave and enthusiastic as it certainly is, or from the recollection of the ancient Catholic opinions, when the funeral rites were always considered as a period of festival to the living: but feasting, good cheer, and even inebriety, were, and are, the frequent accompaniments of a Scottish old-fashioned burial. What the funeral feast, or 'dirgie,' as it is called, was to the men, the gloomy preparations of the dead body for the coffin were to the women. To straight the contorted limbs upon a board used for that melancholy purpose, to array the corpse in clean linen, and over that in its woollen shroud, were operations committed always to the old matrons of the village, and in which they found a singular and gloomy delight.

The old women paid the Master their salutations with a ghastly smile, which reminded him of the meeting betwixt Macbeth and the witches on the blasted heath of Forres. He gave them some money, and recommended to them the charge of the dead body of their contemporary, an office which they willingly undertook; intimating to him at the same time that he must leave the hut, in order that they might begin their mournful duties. Ravenswood readiiy agreed to depart, only tarrying to recommend to them due attention to the body, and to receive information where he was to find the sexton, or beadle, who had in charge the deserted churchyard of the Armitage, in order to prepare matters for the reception of Old Alice in the place of repose which she had selected for herself.

'Ye 'll no be pinched to find out Johnie Mortsheugh,' said the elder sibyl, and still her withered cheek bore a grisly smile; 'he dwells near the Tod's Hole, a house of entertainment where there has been mony a blithe birling, for death and drink-draining are near neighbours to ane anither.'

'Ay! and that 's e'en true, cummer,' said the lame hag, propping herself with a crutch which supported the shortness of her left leg, 'for I mind when the father of this Master of Ravenswood that is now standing before us sticked young Blackhall with his whinger, for a wrang word said ower their wine, or brandy, or what not: he gaed in as light as a lark, and he came out wi' his feet foremost. I was at the winding of

the corpse; and when the bluid was washed off, he was a bonny bouk of man's body.'

It may easily be believed that this ill-timed anecdote hastened the Master's purpose of quitting a company so evil-omened and so odious. Yet, while walking to the tree to which his horse was tied, and busying himself with adjusting the girths of the saddle, he could not avoid hearing, through the hedge of the little garden, a conversation respecting himself, betwixt the lame woman and the octogenarian sibyl. The pair had hobbled into the garden to gather rosemary, southernwood, rue, and other plants proper to be strewed upon the body, and burned by way of fumigation in the chimney of the cottage. The paralytic wretch, almost exhausted by the journey, was left guard upon the corpse, lest witches or fiends might play their sport with it.

The following low, croaking dialogue was necessarily overheard by the Master of Ravenswood:—

'That's a fresh and full-grown hemlock, Annie Winnie; mony a cummer lang syne wad hae sought nae better horse 'o flee over hill and how, through mist and moonlight, and light down in the King of France's cellar.'

'Ay, cummer! but the very deil has turned as hard-hearted now as the Lord Keeper and the grit folk, that hae breasts like whinstane. They prick us and they pine us, and they pit us on the pinnywinkles for witches; and, if I say my prayers backwards ten times ower, Satan will never gie me amends o' them.'

'Did ye ever see the foul thief?' asked her neighbour.

'Na!' replied the other spokeswoman; 'but I trow I hae dreamed of him mony a time, and I think the day will come they will burn me for't. But ne'er mind, cummer! we hae this dollar of the Master's, and we'll send doun for bread and for yill, tobacco, and a drap brandy to burn, and a wee pickle saft sugar; and be there deil, or nae deil, lass, we'll hae a merry night o't.'

Here her leathern chops uttered a sort of cackling, ghastly laugh, resembling, to a certain degree, the cry of the screech owl.

'He's a frank man, and a free-handed man, the Master, said Annie Winnie, 'and a comely personage—broad in the shouthers, and narrow around the lungies. He wad mak a bonny corpse; I wad like to hae the streiking and winding o' him.

'It is written on his brow, Annie Winnie,' returned the

octogenarian, her companion, 'that hand of woman, or of man either, will never straught him: dead-deal will never be laid on his back, make you your market of that, for I hae it frae a sure hand.'

'Will it be his lot to die on the battle-ground then, Ailsie Gourlay? Will he die by the sword or the ball, as his forbears hae dune before him, mony ane o' them?'

'Ask nae mair questions about it — he 'll no be graced sae far,' replied the sage.

'I ken ye are wiser than ither folk, Ailsie Gourlay. But wha tell'd ye this?'

'Fashna your thumb about that, Annie Winnie,' answered the sibyl, 'I hae it frae a hand sure eneugh.'

'But ye said ye never saw the foul thief,' reiterated her inquisitive companion.

'I hae it frae as sure a hand,' said Ailsie, 'and frae them that spaed his fortune before the sark gaed ower his head.'

'Hark! I hear his horse's feet riding aff,' said the other; 'they dinna sound as if good luck was wi' them.'

'Mak haste, sirs,' cried the paralytic hag from the cottage, 'and let us do what is needfu', and say what is fitting; for, if the dead corpse binna straughted, it will girn and thraw, and that will fear the best o' us.'

Ravenswood was now out of hearing. He despised most of the ordinary prejudices about witchcraft, omens, and vaticination, to which his age and country still gave such implicit credit that to express a doubt of them was accounted a crime equal to the unbelief of Jews or Saracens; he knew also that the prevailing belief concerning witches, operating upon the hypochondriac habits of those whom age, infirmity, and poverty rendered liable to suspicion, and enforced by the fear of death and the pangs of the most cruel tortures, often extorted those confessions which encumber and disgrace the criminal records of Scotland during the 17th century. But the vision of that morning, whether real or imaginary, had impressed his mind with a superstitious feeling which he in vain endeavoured to shake off. The nature of the business which awaited him at the little inn, called Tod's Hole, where he soon after arrived, was not of a kind to restore his spirits.

It was necessary he should see Mortsheugh, the sexton of the old burial-ground at Armitage, to arrange matters for the funeral of Alice; and, as the man dwelt near the place of her late residence, the Master, after a slight refreshment, walked

towards the place where the body of Alice was to be deposited. It was situated in the nook formed by the eddying sweep of a stream, which issued from the adjoining hills. A rude cavern in an adjacent rock, which, in the interior, was cut into the shape of a cross, formed the hermitage, where some Saxon saint had in ancient times done penance, and given name to the place. The rich Abbey of Coldinghame had, in latter days, established a chapel in the neighbourhood, of which no vestige was now visible, though the churchyard which surrounded it was still, as upon the present occasion, used for the interment of particular persons. One or two shattered yew-trees still grew within the precincts of that which had once been holy ground. Warriors and barons had been buried there of old, but their names were forgotten, and their monuments demolished. The only sepulchral memorials which remained were the upright headstones which mark the graves of persons of inferior rank. The abode of the sexton was a solitary cottage adjacent to the ruined wall of the cemetery, but so low that, with its thatch, which nearly reached the ground, covered with a thick crop of grass, fog, and house-leaks, it resembled an overgrown grave. On inquiry, however, Ravenswood found that the man of the last mattock was absent at a bridal, being fiddler as well as grave-digger to the vicinity. He therefore retired to the little inn, leaving a message that early next morning he would again call for the person whose double occupation connected him at once with the house of mourning and the house of feasting.

An outrider of the Marquis arrived at Tod's Hole shortly after, with a message, intimating that his master would join Ravenswood at that place on the following morning: and the Master, who would otherwise have proceeded to his old retreat at Wolf's Crag, remained there accordingly to give meeting to his noble kinsman.

CHAPTER XXIV

Ham. .. Has this fellow no feeling of his business? he sings at grave-making.
Horatio. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.
Hamlet. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

Hamlet, Act V. Scene 1.

THE sleep of Ravenswood was broken by ghastly and agitating visions, and his waking intervals disturbed by melancholy reflections on the past and painful anticipations of the future. He was perhaps the only traveller who ever slept in that miserable kennel without complaining of his lodgings, or feeling inconvenience from their deficiencies. It is when 'the mind is free the body 's delicate.' Morning, however, found the Master an early riser, in hopes that the fresh air of the dawn might afford the refreshment which night had refused him. He took his way toward the solitary burial-ground, which lay about half a mile from the inn.

The thin blue smoke, which already began to curl upward, and to distinguish the cottage of the living from the habitation of the dead, apprised him that its inmate had returned and was stirring. Accordingly, on entering the little churchyard, he saw the old man labouring in a half-made grave. 'My destiny,' thought Ravenswood, 'seems to lead me to scenes of fate and of death; but these are childish thoughts, and they shall not master me. I will not again suffer my imagination to beguile my senses.' The old man rested on his spade as the Master approached him, as if to receive his commands; and as he did not immediately speak, the sexton opened the discourse in his own way.

'Ye will be a wedding customer, sir, I'se warrant?'

'What makes you think so, friend?' replied the Master.

'I live by twa trades, sir,' replied the blithe old man 'fiddle, sir, and spade; filling the world, and emptying of it;

and I suld ken baith cast of customers by head-mark in thirty years' practice.'

'You are mistaken, however, this morning,' replied Ravenswood.

'Am I?' said the old man, looking keenly at him, 'troth and it may be; since, for as brent as your brow is, there is something sitting upon it this day that is as near akin to death as to wedlock. Weel - weel: the pick and shovel are as ready to your order as bow and fiddle.'

'I wish you,' said Ravenswood, 'to look after the decent interment of an old woman, Alice Gray, who lived at the Craigfoot in Ravenswood Park.'

'Alice Gray!--blind Alice!' said the sexton; 'and is she gane at last? that 's another jow of the bell to bid me be ready. I mind when Habbie Gray brought her down to this land, a likely lass she was then, and looked ower her southland nose at us a'. I trow her pride got a downcome. And is she e'en gane?'

'She died yesterday,' said Ravenswood; 'and desired to be buried here beside her husband; you know where he lies, no doubt?'

'Ken where he lies!' answered the sexton, with national indirection of response. 'I ken whar a'body lies, that lies here. But ye were speaking o' her grave? Lord help us, it 's no an ordinar grave that will hand her in, if a's true that folk said of Alice in her auld days; and if I gae to six feet deep, and a warlock's grave shouldna be an inch mair ebb, or her ain witch cummers would soon whirl her out of her shroud for a' their auld acquaintance--and be 't six feet, or be 't three, wha 's to say the making o't, I pray ye?'

'I will pay that, my friend, and all reasonable charges.'

'Reasonable charges!' said the sexton; 'ou, there 's grund-mail--and bell-siller, though the bell 's broken nae doubt--and the kist--and my day's wark--and [illegible] fee--and some brandy and yill to the dirgie; I [illegible]king that you can inter her, to ca' decently, und[illegible] pund Scots.'

'There is the money, my friend,' said Rav[illegible]od, 'and something over. Be sure you know the grave.'

'Ye 'll be ane o' her English relations, I 'se warrant,' said the hoary man of skulls; 'I hae heard she married far below her station. It was very right to let her bite on the bridle when she was living, and it 's very right to gie her a decent burial

now she 's dead, for th[illegible] a matter o' credit to yoursell rather than to her. Folk may let their kindred shift for themsells when they are alive, and can bear the burden of their ain misdoings; but it 's an unnatural thing to let them be buried like dogs, when a' the discredit gangs to the kindred. What kens the dead corpse about it?'

'You would not have people neglect their relations on a bridal occasion neither?' said Ravenswood, who was amused with the professional limitation of the grave-digger's philanthropy.

The old man cast up his sharp grey eyes with a shrewd smile, as if he understood the jest, but instantly continued, with his former gravity, 'Bridals — wha wad neglect bridals that had ony regard for plenishing the earth? To be sure, they suld be celebrated with all manner of good cheer, and meeting of friends, and musical instruments — harp, sackbut, and psaltery; or gude fiddle and pipes, when these auld-warld instruments of melody are hard to be compassed.'

'The presence of the fiddle, I daresay,' replied Ravenswood, 'would atone for the absence of all others.'

The sexton again looked sharply up at him, as he answered, 'Nae doubt — nae doubt, if it were weel played; but yonder,' he said, as if to change the discourse, 'is Halbert Gray's lang hame, that ye were speering after, just the third bourock beyond the muckle through-stane that stands on sax legs yonder, abune some ane of the Ravenswoods; for there is mony of their kin and followers here, deil lift them! though it isna just their main burial-place.'

'They are no favourites, then, of yours, these Ravenswoods?' said the Master, not much pleased with the passing benediction which was thus bestowed on his family and name.

'I kenna wha should favour them,' said the grave-digger; 'when they had lands and power, they were ill guides of them baith, and now their head 's down, there 's few care how lang they may be of lifting it again.'

'Indeed!' said Ravenswood; 'I never heard that this unhappy family deserved ill-will at the hands of their country. I grant their poverty, if that renders them contemptible.'

'It will gang a far way till 't,' said the sexton of Hermitage, 'ye may tak my word for that; at least, I ken naething else that suld mak myself contemptible, and folk are far frae respecting me as they wad do if I lived in a twa-lofted slated house. But as for the Ravenswoods, I hae seen three generations of them, deil ane to mend other.'

'I thought they had enjoyed a fair character in the country,' said their descendant.

'Character! Ou, ye see, sir,' said the sexton, 'as for the auld gude-sire body of a lord, I lived on his land when I was a swanking young chield, and could hae blawn the trumpet wi ony body, for I had wind eneugh then; and touching this trumpeter Marine[1] that I have heard play afore the lord o the circuit, I wad hae made nae mair o' him than of a lairo and a hawbee whistle. I defy him to hae played "Boot and saddle," or "Horse and away," or "Gallants, come trot," with me: he hadna the tones.'

'But what is all this to old Lord Ravenswood, my friend?' said the Master, who, with an anxiety not unnatural in his circumstances, was desirous of prosecuting the musician's first topic — 'what had his memory to do with the degeneracy of the trumpet music?'

'Just this, sir,' answered the sexton, 'that I lost my wind in his service. Ye see I was trumpeter at the castle, and had allowance for blawing at break of day, and at dinner time, and other whiles when there was company about, and it pleased my lord; and when he raised his militia to caper awa' to Bothwell Brig against the wrang-headed wastland Whigs, I behoved, reason or nane, to munt a horse and caper awa' wi' them.'

'And very reasonable,' said Ravenswood; 'you were his servant and vassal.'

'Servitor, say ye?' replied the sexton, 'and so I was: but it was to blaw folk to their warm dinner, or at the warst to a decent kirkyard, and no to skirl them awa' to a bluidy braeside, where there was deil a bedral but the hooded craw. But lithe ye, ye shall hear what cam o't, and how far I am bund to be bedesman to the Ravenswoods. Till 't, ye see, we gaed on a braw simmer morning, twenty-fourth of June, saxteen hundred and se'enty-nine, of a' the days of the month and year — drums beat, guns rattled, horses kie'ed and trampled. Hackstoun of Rathillet keepit the brig wi a musket and carabine and pike, sword and scythe for what I ken, and we horsemen were ordered down to cross at the ford, — I hate fords at a' times, let alone when there 's thousands of armed men on the other side. There was auld Ravenswood brandishing his Andrew Ferrara at the head, and crying to us to come and buckle to, as if we had been gaun to a fair; there was Caleb Balderstone, that is living yet, flourishing in the rear, and swearing Gog and Magog, he would

[1] See Note 10.

put steel through the guts of ony man that turned bridle; there was young Allan Ravenswood, that was then Master, wi' a bended pistol in his hand—it was a mercy it gaed na aff!—crying to me, that had scarce as much wind left as serve the necessary purpose of my ain lungs, "Sound, you poltroon!—sound, you damned cowardly villain, or I will blow your brains out!" and, to be sure, I blew sic points of war that the scraugh of a clockin-hen was music to them.'

'Well, sir, cut all this short,' said Ravenswood.

'Short! I had like to hae been cut short myself, in the flower of my youth, as Scripture says; and that's the very thing that I compleen o'. Weel! in to the water we behoved a' to splash, heels ower head, sit or fa'—ae horse driving on anither, as is the way of brute beasts, and riders that hae as little sense: the very bushes on the ither side were ableeze wi' the flashes of the Whig guns; and my horse had just taen the ground, when a blackavised westland carle—I wad mind the face o' him a hundred years yet—an ee like a wild falcon's, and a beard as broad as my shovel—clapped the end o' his lang black gun within a quarter's length of my lug! By the grace o' Mercy, the horse swarved round, and I fell aff at the tae side as the ball whistled by at the tither, and the fell auld lord took the Whig such a swauk wi' his broadsword that he made two pieces o' his head, and down fell the lurdane wi' a' his bouk abune me.'

'You were rather obliged to the old lord, I think,' said Ravenswood.

'Was I? my sartie! first for bringing me into jeopardy, would I nould I, and then for whomling a chield on the tap o' me that dang the very wind out of my body? I hae been short-breathed ever since, and canna gang twenty yards without peghing like a miller's aiver.'

'You lost, then, your place as trumpeter?' said Ravenswood.

'Lost it! to be sure I lost it,' replied the sexton, 'for I couldna hae played pew upon a dry humlock; but I might hae dune weel eneugh, for I keepit the wage and the free house, and little to do but play on the fiddle to them, but for Allan, last Lord Ravenswood, that was faur waur than ever his father was.

'What,' said the Master, 'did my father—I mean, did his father's son—this last Lord Ravenswood, deprive you of what the bounty of his father allowed you?'

'Ay, troth did he,' answered the old man; 'for he loot his

affairs gang to the dogs, and let in this Sir William Ashton on us, that will gie naething for naething, and just removed me and a' the puir creatures that had bite and soup in the castle, and a hole to put our heads in, when things were in the auld way.'

'If Lord Ravenswood protected his people, my friend, while he had the means of doing so, I think they might spare his memory,' replied the Master.

'Ye are welcome to your ain opinion, sir,' said the sexton; 'but ye winna persuade me that he did his duty, either to himsell or to huz puir dependent creatures, in guiding us the gate he has done; he might hae gien us life rent tacks of our bits o' houses and yards; and me, that 's an auld man, living in yon miserable cabin, that 's fitter for the dead than the quick, and killed wi' rheumatise, and John Smith in my dainty bit mailing, and his window glazen, and a' because Ravenswood gusted his gear like a fule!'

'It is but too true,' said Ravenswood, conscience-struck, 'the penalties of extravagance extend far beyond the prodigal's own sufferings.'

'However,' said the sexton, 'this young man Edgar is like to avenge my wrangs on the haill of his kindred.'

'Indeed?' said Ravenswood: 'why should you suppose so?'

'They say he is about to marry the daughter of Leddy Ashton; and let her leddyship get his head ance under her oxter, and see you if she winna gie his neck a thraw. Sorra a bit, if I were him! Let her alane for handing a'thing in het water that draws near her. Sae the warst wish I shall wish the lad is, that he may take his ain creditable gate o't, and ally himsell wi' his father's enemies, that have taken his broad lands and my bonny kail yard from the lawful owners thereof.'

Cervantes acutely remarks, that flattery is pleasing even from the mouth of a madman: and censure, as well as praise, often affects us, while we despise the opinions and motives on which it is founded and expressed. Ravenswood, abruptly reiterating his command that Alice's funeral should be attended to, hung away from the sexton, under the painful impression that the great as well as the small vulgar would think of his engagement with Lucy like this ignorant and selfish peasant.

'And I have stooped to subject myself to these calumnies, and am rejected notwithstanding! Lucy, your faith must be true and perfect as the diamond to compensate for the dis-

honour which men's opinions, and the conduct of your mother, attach to the heir of Ravenswood!'

As he raised his eyes, he beheld the Marquis of A——, who, having arrived at the Tod's Hole, had walked forth to look for his kinsman.

After mutual greetings, he made some apology to the Master for not coming forward on the preceding evening. 'It was his wish,' he said, 'to have done so, but he had come to the knowledge of some matters which induced him to delay his purpose. I find,' he proceeded, 'there has been a love affair here, kinsman; and though I might blame you for not having communicated with me, as being in some degree the chief of your family——'

'With your lordship's permission,' said Ravenswood, 'I am deeply grateful for the interest you are pleased to take in me, but *I* am the chief and head of my family.'

'I know it—I know it,' said the Marquis; 'in a strict heraldic and genealogical sense, you certainly are so: what I mean is, that being in some measure under my guardianship——'

'I must take the liberty to say, my lord——' answered Ravenswood, and the tone in which he interrupted the Marquis boded no long duration to the friendship of the noble relatives, when he himself was interrupted by the little sexton, who came puffing after them, to ask if their honours would choose music at the change-house to make up for short cheer.

'We want no music,' said the Master, abruptly.

'Your honour disna ken what ye're refusing, then,' said the fiddler, with the impertinent freedom of his profession. 'I can play, "Wilt thou do't again," and "The Auld Man's Mear's Dead," sax times better than ever Patie Birnie.[1] I'll get my fiddle in the turning of a coffin-screw.'

'Take yourself away, sir,' said the Marquis.

'And if your honour be a north country gentleman,' said the persevering minstrel, 'whilk I can judge from your tongue, I can play "Liggeram Cosh," and "Mullin Dhu," and "The Cummers of Athole."'

'Take yourself away, friend; you interrupt our conversation.'

'Or if, under your honour's favour, ye should happen to be a thought honest, I can play (this in a low and confidential tone) "Killiecrankie," and "The King shall hae his ain," and

[1] A celebrated fiddler and songster of Kinghorn. See Allan Ramsay's *Collected Poems*, ed. 1721 (*Laing*).

"The Auld Stuarts back again"; and the wife at the change house is a decent, discreet body, neither kens nor cares what toasts are drucken, and what tunes are played, in her house: she 's deaf to a'thing but the clink o' the siller.'

The Marquis, who was sometimes suspected of Jacobitism, could not help laughing as he threw the fellow a dollar, and bid him go play to the servants if he had a mind, and leave them at peace.

'Aweel, gentlemen,' said he, 'I am wishing your honours gude day. I'll be a' the better of the dollar, and ye'll be the waur of wanting the music, I'se tell ye. But I'se gang hame, and finish the grave in the tuning o' a fiddle-string, lay by my spade, and then get my tother bread-winner, and awa' to your folk, and see if they hae better lugs than their masters.'

CHAPTER XXV

True love, an thou be true,
  Thou hast ane kittle part to play;
For fortune, fashion, fancy, and thou,
  Maun strive for many a day.

I 've kend by mony a friend's tale,
  Far better by this heart of mine,
What time and change of fancy avail
  A true-love knot to untwine.

HENDERSOUN.

'I WISHED to tell you, my good kinsman,' said the Marquis, 'now that we are quit of that impertinent fiddler, that I had tried to discuss this love affair of yours with Sir William Ashton's daughter. I never saw the young lady but for a few minutes to-day; so, being a stranger to her personal merits, I pay a compliment to you, and offer her no offence, in saying you might do better.'

'My lord, I am much indebted for the interest you have taken in my affairs,' said Ravenswood. 'I did not intend to have troubled you in any matter concerning Miss Ashton. As my engagement with that young lady has reached your lordship, I can only say, that you must necessarily suppose that I was aware of the objections to my marrying into her father's family, and of course must have been completely satisfied with the reasons by which these objections are overbalanced, since I have proceeded so far in the matter.'

'Nay, Master, if you had heard me out,' said his noble relation, 'you might have spared that observation; for, without questioning that you had reasons which seemed to you to counterbalance every other obstacle, I set myself, by every means that it became me to use towards the Ashtons, to persuade them to meet your views.

'I am obliged to your lordship for your unsolicited intercession,' said Ravenswood; 'especially as I am sure your lord-

ship would never carry it beyond the bounds which it became me to use.'

'Of that,' said the Marquis, 'you may be confident; I myself felt the delicacy of the matter too much to place a gentleman nearly connected with my house in a degrading or dubious situation with these Ashtons. But I pointed out all the advantages of their marrying their daughter into a house so honourable, and so nearly related with the first in Scotland; I explained the exact degree of relationship in which the Ravenswoods stand to ourselves; and I even hinted how political matters were like to turn, and what cards would be trumps next Parliament. I said I regarded you as a son — or a nephew, or so — rather than as a more distant relation; and that I made your affair entirely my own.'

'And what was the issue of your lordship's explanation?' said Ravenswood, in some doubt whether he should resent or express gratitude for his interference.

'Why, the Lord Keeper would have listened to reason,' said the Marquis; 'he is rather unwilling to leave his place, which, in the present view of a change, must be vacated; and, to say truth, he seemed to have a liking for you, and to be sensible of the general advantages to be attained by such a match. But his lady, who is tongue of the trump, Master ——'

'What of Lady Ashton, my lord?' said Ravenswood; 'let me know the issue of this extraordinary conference: I can bear it.'

'I am glad of that, kinsman,' said the Marquis, 'for I am ashamed to tell you half what she said. It is enough — her mind is made up, and the mistress of a first-rate boarding-school could not have rejected with more haughty indifference the suit of a half-pay Irish officer, beseeching permission to wait upon the heiress of a West India planter, than Lady Ashton spurned every proposal of mediation which it could at all become me to offer in behalf of you, my good kinsman. I cannot guess what she means. A more honourable connexion she could not form, that 's certain. As for money and land, that used to be her husband's business rather than hers: I really think she hates you for having the rank which her husband has not, and perhaps for not having the lands that her goodman has. But I should only vex you to say more about it — here we are at the change-house.'

The Master of Ravenswood paused as he entered the

cottage, which reeked through all its crevices, and they were not few, from the exertions of the Marquis's travelling-cooks to supply good cheer, and spread, as it were, a table in the wilderness.

'My Lord Marquis,' said Ravenswood, 'I already mentioned that accident has put your lordship in possession of a secret which, with my consent, should have remained one even to you, my kinsman, for some time. Since the secret was to part from my own custody, and that of the only person besides who was interested in it, I am not sorry it should have reached your lordship's ears, as being fully aware that you are my noble kinsman and friend.'

'You may believe it is safely lodged with me, Master of Ravenswood,' said the Marquis; 'but I should like well to hear you say that you renounced the idea of an alliance which you can hardly pursue without a certain degree of degradation.'

'Of that, my lord, I shall judge,' answered Ravenswood, 'and I hope with delicacy as sensitive as any of my friends. But I have no engagement with Sir William and Lady Ashton. It is with Miss Ashton alone that I have entered upon the subject, and my conduct in the matter shall be entirely ruled by hers. If she continues to prefer me in my poverty to the wealthier suitors whom her friends recommend, I may well make some sacrifice to her sincere affection: I may well surrender to her the less tangible and less palpable advantages of birth, and the deep-rooted prejudices of family hatred. If Miss Lucy Ashton should change her mind on a subject of such delicacy, I trust my friends will be silent on my disappointment, and I shall know how to make my enemies so.'

'Spoke like a gallant young nobleman,' said the Marquis; 'for my part, I have that regard for you, that I should be sorry the thing went on. This Sir William Ashton was a pretty enough pettifogging kind of a lawyer twenty years ago, and betwixt battling at the bar and leading in committees of Parliament he has got well on: the Darien matter lent him a lift, for he had good intelligence and sound views, and sold out in time; but the best work is had out of him. No government will take him at his own, or rather his wife's extravagant, valuation; and betwixt his indecision and her insolence, from all I can guess, he will outsit his market, and be had cheap when no one will bid for him. I say nothing of Miss Ashton; but I assure you, a connexion with her father

will be neither useful nor ornamental, beyond that part of your father's spoils which he may be prevailed upon to disgorge by way of tocher-good; and take my word for it, you will get more if you have spirit to bell the cat with him in the House of Peers. And I will be the man, cousin,' continued his lordship, 'will course the fox for you, and make him rue the day that ever he refused a composition too honourable for him, and proposed by me on the behalf of a kinsman.'

There was something in all this that, as it were, overshot the mark. Ravenswood could not disguise from himself that his noble kinsman had more reasons for taking offence at the reception of his suit than regarded his interest and honour, yet he could neither complain nor be surprised that it should be so. He contented himself, therefore, with repeating, that his attachment was to Miss Ashton personally; that he desired neither wealth nor aggrandisement from her father's means and influence; and that nothing should prevent his keeping his engagement, excepting her own express desire that it should be relinquished; and he requested as a favour that the matter might be no more mentioned betwixt them at present, assuring the Marquis of A—— that he should be his confidant in its progress or its interruption.

The Marquis soon had more agreeable, as well as more interesting, subjects on which to converse. A foot-post, who had followed him from Edinburgh to Ravenswood Castle, and had traced his steps to the Tod's Hole, brought him a packet laden with good news. The political calculations of the Marquis had proved just, both in London and at Edinburgh, and he saw almost within his grasp the pre-eminence for which he had panted. The refreshments which the servants had prepared were now put on the table, and an epicure would perhaps have enjoyed them with additional zest from the contrast which such fare afforded to the miserable cabin in which it was served up.

The turn of conversation corresponded with and added to the social feelings of the company. The Marquis expanded with pleasure on the power which probable incidents were likely to assign to him, and on the use which he hoped to make of it in serving his kinsman Ravenswood. Ravenswood could but repeat the gratitude which he really felt, even when he considered the topic as too long dwelt upon. The wine was excellent, notwithstanding its having been brought in a runlet from Edinburgh; and the habits of the Marquis, when engaged

with such good cheer, were somewhat sedentary. And so it fell out that they delayed their journey two hours later than was their original purpose.

'But what of that, my good young friend?' said the Marquis. 'Your Castle of Wolf's Crag is but five or six miles' distance, and will afford the same hospitality to your kinsman of A—— that it gave to this same Sir William Ashton.'

'Sir William took the castle by storm,' said Ravenswood, 'and, like many a victor, had little reason to congratulate himself on his conquest.'

'Well — well!' said Lord A——, whose dignity was something relaxed by the wine he had drunk, 'I see I must bribe you to harbour me. Come, pledge me in a bumper health to the last young lady that slept at Wolf's Crag, and liked her quarters. My bones are not so tender as hers, and I am resolved to occupy her apartment to-night, that I may judge how hard the couch is that love can soften.'

'Your lordship may choose what penance you please,' said Ravenswood; 'but I assure you, I should expect my old servant to hang himself, or throw himself from the battlements, should you lordship visit him so unexpectedly. I do assure you, we are totally and literally unprovided.'

But his declaration only brought from his noble patron an assurance of his own total indifference as to every species of accommodation, and his determination to see the Tower of Wolf's Crag. His ancestor, he said, had been feasted there, when he went forward with the then Lord Ravenswood to the fatal battle of Flodden, in which they both fell. Thus hard pressed, the Master offered to ride forward to get matters put in such preparation as time and circumstances admitted; but the Marquis protested his kinsman must afford him his company, and would only consent that an avant-courier should carry to the destined seneschal, Caleb Balderstone, the unexpected news of this invasion.

The Master of Ravenswood soon after accompanied the Marquis in his carriage, as the latter had proposed; and when they became better acquainted in the progress of the journey, his noble relation explained the very liberal views which he entertained for his relation's preferment, in case of the success of his own political schemes. They related to a secret and highly important commission beyond sea, which could only be entrusted to a person of rank, and talent, and perfect confidence, and which, as it required great trust and reliance on the envoy employed,

could not but prove both honourable and advantageous to him. We need not enter into the nature and purpose of this commission, farther than to acquaint our readers that the charge was in prospect highly acceptable to the Master of Ravenswood, who hailed with pleasure the hope of emerging from his present state of indigence and inaction into independence and honourable exertion.

While he listened thus eagerly to the details with which the Marquis now thought it necessary to entrust him, the messenger who had been despatched to the Tower of Wolf's Crag returned with Caleb Balderstone's humble duty, and an assurance that 'a' should be in seemly order, sic as the hurry of time permitted, to receive their lordships as it behoved.'

Ravenswood was too well accustomed to his seneschal's mode of acting and speaking to hope much from this confident assurance. He knew that Caleb acted upon the principle of the Spanish generals, in the compaign of ——, who, much to the perplexity of the Prince of Orange, their commander-in-chief, used to report their troops as full in number, and possessed of all necessary points of equipment, not considering it consistent with their dignity, or the honour of Spain, to confess any deficiency either in men or munition, until the want of both was unavoidably discovered in the day of battle. Accordingly, Ravenswood thought it necessary to give the Marquis some hint that the fair assurance which they had just received from Caleb did not by any means ensure them against a very indifferent reception.

'You do yourself injustice, Master,' said the Marquis, 'or you wish to surprise me agreeably. From this window I see a great light in the direction where, if I remember aright, Wolf's Crag lies; and, to judge from the splendour which the old Tower sheds around it, the preparations for our reception must be of no ordinary description. I remember your father putting the same deception on me, when we went to the Tower for a few days' hawking, about twenty years since, and yet we spent our time as jollily at Wolf's Crag as we could have done at my own hunting seat at B——.'

'Your lordship, I fear, will experience that the faculty of the present proprietor to entertain his friends is greatly abridged, said Ravenswood; 'the will, I need hardly say, remains the same. But I am as much at a loss as your lordship to account for so strong and brilliant a light as is now above Wolf's Crag; the windows of the Tower are few and

narrow, and those of the lower story are hidden from us by the walls of the court. I cannot conceive that any [illegible] nation of an ordinary nature could afford such a blaze of light.'

The mystery was soon explained; for the cavalcade almost instantly halted, and the voice of Caleb Balderstone was heard at the coach window, exclaiming, in accents broken by grief and fear, 'Och, gentlemen! Och, my gude lords! Och, haud to the right! Wolf's Crag is burning, bower and ha' — a' the rich plenishing outside and inside — a' the fine graith, pictures, tapestries, needle wark, hangings, and other decorements — a' in a bleeze, as if they were nae mair than sae mony peats, or as muckle pease-straw! Haud to the right, gentlemen, I implore ye; there is some sma' provision making at Luckie Sma'trash's; but O, wae for this night, and wae for me that lives to see it!'

Ravenswood was at first stunned by this new and unexpected calamity; but after a moment's recollection he sprang from the carriage, and hastily bidding his noble kinsman good-night, was about to ascend the hill towards the castle, the broad and full conflagration of which now flung forth a high column of red light, that flickered far to seaward upon the dashing waves of the ocean.

'Take a horse, Master,' exclaimed the Marquis, greatly affected by this additional misfortune, so unexpectedly heaped upon his young *protégé*; 'and give me my ambling palfrey; and haste forward, you knaves, to see what can be done to save the furniture, or to extinguish the fire — ride, you knaves, for your lives!'

The attendants bustled together, and began to [illegible] their horses with the spur, and call upon Caleb to show [illegible] road. But the voice of that careful seneschal was heard above the tumult, 'O, stop — sirs, stop — turn bridle, for the love of Mercy; add not loss of lives to the loss of warld's gear! Thirty barrels of powther, landed out of a Dunkirk dogger in the auld lord's time — a' in the vaults of the auld tower, — the fire canna be far aff it, I trow. Lord's sake, to the right, lads — to the right; let's pit the hill atween us and the deil — a wap wi' a corner-stane o' Wolf's Crag wad defy the doctor!'

It will readily be supposed that this annunciation hurried the Marquis and his attendants into the route which Caleb prescribed, dragging Ravenswood along with them, although there was much in the matter which he could not possibly comprehend. 'Gunpowder!' he exclaimed, laying hold of Caleb, who in vain endeavoured to escape from him, 'what gunpowder?

How any quantity of powder could be in Wolf's Crag without my knowledge, I cannot possibly comprehend.'

'But I can,' interrupted the Marquis, whispering him, 'I can comprehend it thoroughly; for God's sake, ask him no more questions at present.'

'There it is, now,' said Caleb, extricating himself from his master, and adjusting his dress, 'your honour will believe his lordship's honourable testimony. His lordship minds weel how, in the year that him they ca'd King Willie died ——'

'Hush! hush, my good friend!' said the Marquis; 'I shall satisfy your master upon that subject.'

'And the people at Wolf's Hope,' said Ravenswood, 'did none of them come to your assistance before the flame got so high?'

'Ay did they, mony ane of them, the rapscallions!' said Caleb; 'but truly I was in nae hurry to let them into the Tower, where there were so much plate and valuables.'

'Confound you for an impudent liar!' said Ravenswood, in uncontrollable ire, 'there was not a single ounce of ——'

'Forbye,' said the butler, most irreverently raising his voice to a pitch which drowned his master's, 'the fire made fast on us, owing to the store of tapestry and carved timmer in the banqueting-ha', and the loons ran like scauded rats sae sune as they heard of the gunpouther.'

'I do entreat,' said the Marquis to Ravenswood, 'you will ask him no more questions.'

'Only one, my lord. What has become of poor Mysie?'

'Mysie!' said Caleb, 'I had nae time to look about my Mysie; she 's in the Tower, I'se warrant, biding her awful doom.'

'By heaven,' said Ravenswood, 'I do not understand all this! The life of a faithful old creature is at stake; my lord, I will be withheld no longer; I will at least ride up, and see whether the danger is as imminent as this old fool pretends.'

'Weel, then, as I live by bread,' said Caleb, 'Mysie is weel and safe. I saw her out of the castle before I left it mysell. Was I ganging to forget an auld fellow-servant?'

'What made you tell me the contrary this moment?' said his master.

'Did I tell you the contrary?' said Caleb; 'then I maun hae been dreaming surely, or this awsome night has turned my judgment; but safe she is, and ne'er living a soul in the castle, a' the better for them: they wad have gotten an unco heezy.'

The Master of Ravenswood, upon this assurance being solemnly reiterated, and notwithstanding his extreme wish to witness the last explosion, which was to ruin to the ground the mansion of his fathers, suffered himself to be dragged onward towards the village of Wolf's Hope, where not only the change house, but that of our well-known friend the cooper, were all prepared for reception of himself and his noble guest, with a liberality of provision which requires some explanation.

We omitted to mention in its place, that Lockhard having fished out the truth concerning the mode by which Caleb had obtained the supplies for his banquet, the Lord Keeper, amused with the incident, and desirous at the time to gratify Ravenswood, had recommended the cooper of Wolf's Hope to the official situation under gov. ment the prospect of which had reconciled him to the loss of his wild-fowl. Mr. Girder's preferment had occasioned a pleasing surprise to old Caleb; for when, some days after his master's departure, he found himself absolutely compelled, by some necessary business, to visit the fishing hamlet, and was gliding like a ghost past the door of the cooper, for fear of being summoned to give some account of the progress of the solicitation in his favour, or, more probably, that the inmates might upbraid him with the false hope he had held out upon the subject, he heard himself, not without some apprehension, summoned at once in treble, tenor, and bass — a trio performed by the voices of Mrs. Girder, old Dame Loup the-Dyke, and the goodman of the dwelling — 'Mr. Caleb! Mr. Caleb! — Mr. Caleb Balderstone! I hope ye arena ganging dry-lipped by our door, and we sae muckle indebted to you?'

This might be said ironically as well as in earnest. Caleb augured the worst, turned a deaf ear to the trio aforesaid, and was moving doggedly on, his ancient castor pulled over his brows, and his eyes bent on the ground, as if to count the flinty pebbles with which the rude pathway was causewayed. But on a sudden he found himself surrounded in his progress, like a stately merchantman in the Gut of Gibraltar (I hope the ladies will excuse the tarpaulin phrase) by three Algerine galleys.

'Guide guide us, Mr. Balderstone!' said Mrs. Girder.

'Wha wad hae thought it of an auld and kenn'd friend!' said the mother.

'And no sae muckle as stay to receive our thanks,' said the cooper himself, 'and frae the like o' me that seldom offers them! I am sure I hope there's nae ill seed sawn between us, Mr. Balderstone. Ony man that has said to ye I am no gratefu'

for the situation of Queen's cooper, let me me a whample at him wi' mine eatche,[1] that 's a'.'

'My good friends — my dear friends,' said Caleb, still doubting how the certainty of the matter might stand, 'what needs a' this ceremony? Ane tries to serve their friends, and sometimes they may happen to prosper, and sometimes to misgie. Naething I care to be fashed wi' less than thanks; I never could bide them.'

'Faith, Mr. Balderstone, ye suld hae been fashed wi' few o' mine,' said the downright man of staves and hoops, 'if I had only your gude-will to thank ye for: I suld e'en hae set the guse, and the wild deukes, and the runlet of sack to balance that account. Gude-will, maun, is a geizen'd tub, that hauds in nae liquor; but gude deed 's like the cask, tight, round, and sound, that will haud liquor for the king.'

'Have ye no heard of our letter,' said the mother-in-law, 'making our John the Queen's cooper for certain? and scarce a chield that had ever hammered gird upon tub but was applying for it?'

'Have I heard! ! !' said Caleb, who now found how the wind set, with an accent of exceeding contempt at the doubt expressed — 'have I heard, quo' she! ! !' and as he spoke he changed his shambling, skulking, dodging pace into a manly and authoritative step, readjusted his cocked hat, and suffered his brow to emerge from under it in all the pride of aristocracy, like the sun from behind a cloud.

'To be sure, he canna but hae heard,' said the good woman.

'Ay, to be sure, it 's impossible but I should,' said Caleb; 'and sae I 'll be the first to kiss ye, joe, and wish you, cooper, much joy of your preferment, naething doubting but ye ken wha are your friends, and *hare* helped ye, and *can* help ye. I thought it right to look a wee strange upon it at first,' added Caleb, 'just to see if ye were made of the right mettle: but ye ring true, lad — ye ring true!'

So saying, with a most lordly air he kissed the women, and abandoned his hand, with an air of serene patronage, to the hearty shake of Mr. Girder's horn-hard palm. Upon this complete, and to Caleb most satisfactory, information he did not, it may readily be believed, hesitate to accept an invitation to a solemn feast, to which were invited, not only all the *notables* of the village, but even his ancient antagonist, Mr. Dingwall, himself. At this festivity he was, of course, the most welcome and most honoured guest; and so well did he ply the company

[1] *Anglicè*, adze.

with stories of what he could do with his master, his master with the Lord Keeper, the Lord Keeper with the council, and the council with the king, that before the company dismissed (which was, indeed, rather at an early hour than a late one), every man of note in the village was ascending to the top-gallant of some ideal preferment by the ladder of ropes which Caleb had presented to their imagination. Nay, the cunning butler regained in that moment not only all the influence he possessed formerly over the villagers, when the baronial family which he served were at the proudest, but acquired even an accession of importance. The writer — the very attorney himself, such is the thirst of preferment — felt the force of the attraction, and taking an opportunity to draw Caleb into a corner, spoke, with affectionate regret, of the declining health of the sheriff-clerk of the county.

'An excellent man — a most valuable man, Mr. Caleb; but fat sall I say! we are peer feckless bodies, here the day and awa' by cock-screech the morn: and if he failzies, there maun be somebody in his place; and gif that ye could airt it my way, I sall be thankful, man — a gluve stuffed wi' gowd nobles; an' hark ye, man, something canny till yoursell, and the Wolf's Hope carles to settle kindly wi' the Master of Ravenswood — that is, Lord Ravenswood — God bless his lordship!'

A smile, and a hearty squeeze by the hand, was the suitable answer to this overture; and Caleb made his escape from the jovial party, in order to avoid committing himself by any special promises.

'The Lord be gude to me,' said Caleb, when he found himself in the open air, and at liberty to give vent to the self-exultation with which he was, as it were, distended; 'did ever ony man see sic a set of green-gaislings? The very pick-maws and solan-geese out-bye yonder at the Bass hae ten times their sense! God, an I had been the Lord High Commissioner to the Estates o' Parliament, they couldna hae bethumm'd me mair; and, to speak Heaven's truth, I could hardly hae bethumm'd them better neither! But the writer — ha! ha! ha! — ah, ha! ha! ha! mercy on me, that I suld live in my auld days to gie the gang-bye to the very writer! Sheriff-clerk!!! But I hae an auld account to settle wi' the carle; and to make amends for bye-ganes, the office shall just cost him as much time-serving as if he were to get it in gude earnest, of whilk there is sma' appearance, unless the Master learns mair the ways of this warld, whilk it is muckle to be doubted that he never will do.'

CHAPTER XXVI

Why flames yon far summit — why shoot to the blast
Those embers, like stars from the firmament cast?
'Tis the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven
From thine eyrie, that beacons the darkness of Heaven.

CAMPBELL.

THE circumstances announced in the conclusion of the last chapter will account for the ready and cheerful reception of the Marquis of A—— and the Master of Ravenswood in the village of Wolf's Hope. In fact, Caleb had no sooner announced the conflagration of the tower than the whole hamlet were upon foot to hasten to extinguish the flames. And although that zealous adherent diverted their zeal by intimating the formidable contents of the subterranean apartments, yet the check only turned their assiduity into another direction. Never had there been such slaughtering of capons, and fat geese, and barn-door fowls; never such boiling of 'reested' hams; never such making of car-cakes and sweet scones, Selkirk bannocks, cookies, and petticoat-tails — delicacies little known to the present generation. Never had there been such a tapping of barrels, and such uncorking of greybeards, in the village of Wolf's Hope. All the inferior houses were thrown open for the reception of the Marquis's dependants, who came, it was thought, as precursors of the shower of preferment which hereafter was to leave the rest of Scotland dry, in order to distil its rich dews on the village of Wolf's Hope under Lammermoor. The minister put in his claim to have the guests of distinction lodged at the manse, having his eye, it was thought, upon a neighbouring preferment, where the incumbent was sickly: but Mr. Balderstone destined that honour to the cooper, his wife, and wife's mother, who danced for joy at the preference thus assigned them.

Many a beck and many a bow welcomed these noble guests to as good entertainment as persons of such rank could set

before such visitors; and the old dame, who had formerly lived in Ravenswood Castle, and knew, as she said, the ways of the nobility, was in no whit wanting in arranging matters, as well as circumstances permitted, according to the etiquette of the times. The cooper's house was so roomy that each guest had his separate retiring-room, to which they were ushered with all due ceremony, while the plentiful supper was in the act of being placed upon the table.

Ravenswood no sooner found himself alone than, impelled by a thousand feelings, he left the apartment, the house, and the village, and hastily retraced his steps to the brow of the hill, which rose betwixt the village and screened it from the tower, in order to view the final fall of the house of his fathers. Some idle boys from the hamlet had taken the same direction out of curiosity, having first witnessed the arrival of the coach and six and its attendants. As they ran one by one past the Master, calling to each other to 'Come and see the auld tower blaw up in the lift like the peelings of an ingan,' he could not but feel himself moved with indignation. 'And these are the sons of my father's vassals,' he said — 'of men bound, both by law and gratitude, to follow our steps through battle, and fire, and flood; and now the destruction of their liege lord's house is but a holiday's sight to them!'

These exasperating reflections were partly expressed in the acrimony with which he exclaimed, on feeling himself pulled by the cloak — 'What do you want, you dog?'

'I am a dog, and an auld dog too,' answered Caleb, for it was he who had taken the freedom, 'and I am like to get a dog's wages; but it does not signification a pinch of sneeshing, for I am ower auld a dog to learn new tricks, or to follow a new master.'

As he spoke, Ravenswood attained the ridge of the hill from which Wolf's Crag was visible: the flames had entirely sunk down, and, to his great surprise, there was only a dusky reddening upon the clouds immediately over the castle, which seemed the reflection of the embers of the sunken fire.

'The place cannot have blown up,' said the Master; 'we must have heard the report: if a quarter of the gunpowder was there you tell me of, it would have been heard twenty miles off.'

'It 's very like it wad,' said Balderstone, composedly.

'Then the fire cannot have reached the vaults?'

'It 's like no,' answered Caleb, with the same impenetrable gravity.

'Hark ye, Caleb,' said his master, 'this grows a little too much for my patience. I must go and examine how matters stand at Wolf's Crag myself.'

'Your honour is ganging to gang nae sic gate,' said Caleb, firmly.

'And why not?' said Ravenswood, sharply; 'who or what shall prevent me?'

'Even I mysell,' said Caleb, with the same determination.

'You, Balderstone!' replied the Master; 'you are forgetting yourself, I think.'

'But I think no,' said Balderstone; 'for I can just tell ye a' about the castle on this knowe-head as weel as if ye were at it. Only dinna pit yoursell into a kippage, and expose yoursell before the weans, or before the Marquis, when ye gang down-bye.'

'Speak out, you old fool,' replied his master, 'and let me know the best and the worst at once.'

'Ou, the best and the warst is, just that the tower is standing haill and feir, as safe and as empty as when ye left it.'

'Indeed! and the fire?' said Ravenswood.

'Not a gleed of fire, then, except the bit kindling peat, and maybe a spunk in Mysie's cutty-pipe,' replied Caleb.

'But the flame?' demanded Ravenswood — 'the broad blaze which might have been seen ten miles off — what occasioned that?'

'Hout awa'! it 's an auld saying and a true —

> Little 's the light
> Will be seen in a mirk night.

A wheen fern and horse litter that I fired in the courtyard, after sending back the loon of a footman; and, to speak Heaven's truth, the next time that ye send or bring ony body here, let them be gentles allenarly, without ony fremd servants, like that chield Lockhard, to be gledging and gleeing about, and looking upon the wrang side of ane's housekeeping, to the discredit of the family, and forcing ane to damn their souls wi' telling ae lee after another faster than I can count them: I wad rather set fire to the tower in gude earnest, and burn it ower my ain head into the bargain, or I see the family dishonoured in the sort.'

'Upon my word, I am infinitely obliged by the proposal, Caleb,' said his master, scarce able to restrain his laughter, though rather angry at the same time. 'But the gunpowder — is there such a thing in the tower? The Marquis seemed to know of it.'

'The pouther, ha! ha! ha! — the Marquis, ha! ha! ha!' replied Caleb, — 'if your honour were to brain me, I behooved to laugh, — the Marquis — the pouther! Was it there? Ay, it was there. Did he ken o't? My certie! the Marquis kenn'd o't, and it was the best o' the game; for, when I couldna pacify your honour wi' a' that I could say, I aye threw out a word mair about the gunpouther, and garr'd the Marquis tak the job in his ain hand.'

'But you have not answered my question,' said the Master, impatiently; 'how came the powder there, and where is it now?'

'Ou, it came there, and ye maun needs ken,' said Caleb, looking mysteriously, and whispering, 'when there was like to be a wee bit rising here; and the Marquis, and a' the great lords of the north, were a' in it, and mony a gudely gun and broadsword were ferried ower frae Dunkirk forbye the pouther. Awfu' wark we had getting them into the tower under cloud o' night, for ye maun think it wasna everybody could be trusted wi' sic kittle jobs. But if ye will gae hame to your supper, I will tell you a' about it as ye gang down.'

'And these wretched boys,' said Ravenswood, 'is it your pleasure they are to sit there all night, to wait for the blowing up of a tower that is not even on fire?'

'Surely not, if it is your honour's pleasure that they suld gang hame; although,' added Caleb, 'it wadna do them a grain's damage: they wad screigh less the next day, and sleep the sounder at e'en. But just as your honour likes.'

Stepping accordingly towards the urchins who manned the knolls near which they stood, Caleb informed them, in an authoritative tone, that their honours Lord Ravenswood and the Marquis of A—— had given orders that the tower was not to blow up till next day at noon. The boys dispersed upon this comfortable assurance. One or two, however, followed Caleb for more information, particularly the urchin whom he had cheated while officiating as turnspit, who screamed, 'Mr. Balderstone! — Mr. Balderstone! then the castle 's gane out like an auld wife's spunk?'

'To be sure it is, callant,' said the butler; 'do ye think the castle of as great a lord as Lord Ravenswood wad continue in a bleeze, and him standing looking on wi' his ain very een? It 's aye right,' continued Caleb, shaking off his ragged page, and closing in to his master, 'to train up weans, as the wise man says, in the way they should go, and, aboon a', to teach them respect to their superiors.'

'But all this while, Caleb, you have never told me what became of the arms and the powder,' said Ravenswood.

'Why, as for the arms,' said Caleb, 'it was just like the bairns' rhyme —

> Some gaed east and some gaed west,
> And some gaed to the craw's nest.

And for the pouther, I e'en changed it, as occasion served, with the skippers o' Dutch luggers and French vessels, for gin and brandy, and it served the house mony a year — a gude swap too, between what cheereth the soul of man and that which dingeth it clean out of his body; forbye, I keepit a wheen pounds of it for yoursell when ye wanted to take the pleasure o' shooting: whiles, in these latter days, I wad hardly hae kenn'd else whar to get pouther for your pleasure. And now that your anger is ower, sir, wasna that weel managed o' me, and arena ye far better sorted doun yonder than ye could hae been in your ain auld ruins up-bye yonder, as the case stands wi' us now? the mair 's the pity!'

'I believe you may be right, Caleb; but, before burning down my castle, either in jest or in earnest,' said Ravenswood, 'I think I had a right to be in the secret.'

'Fie for shame, your honour!' replied Caleb; 'it fits an auld carle like me weel eneugh to tell lees for the credit of the family, but it wadna beseem the like o' your honour's sell: besides, young folk are no judicious: they cannot make the maist of a bit figment. Now this fire — for a fire it sall be, if I suld burn the auld stable to make it mair feasible — this fire, besides that it will be an excuse for asking ony thing we want through the country, or doun at the haven — this fire will settle mony things on an honourable footing for the family's credit, that cost me telling twenty daily lees to a wheen idle chaps and queans, and, what 's waur, without gaining credence.'

'That was hard indeed, Caleb; but I do not see how this fire should help your veracity or your credit.'

'There it is now!' said Caleb; 'wasna I saying that young folk had a green judgment? How suld it help me, quotha? It will be a creditable apology for the honour of the family for this score of years to come, if it is weel guided. "Where 's the family pictures?" says ae meddling body. "The great fire at Wolf's Crag," answers I. "Where 's the family plate?" says another. "The great fire," says I; "wha was to think of plate, when life and limb were in danger?" "Where 's the wardrobe

and the linens? — where 's the tapestries and the decorements? — beds of state, twilts, pands and testors, napery and broidered wark?" "The fire — the fire — the fire." Guide the fire weel, and it will serve ye for a' that ye suld have and have not; and, in some sort, a gude excuse is better than the things themselves; for they maun crack and wear out, and be consumed by time, whereas a good offcome, prudently and comfortably handled, may serve a nobleman and his family, Lord kens how lang!'

Ravenswood was too well acquainted with his butler's pertinacity and self-opinion to dispute the point with him any farther. Leaving Caleb, therefore, to the enjoyment of his own successful ingenuity, he returned to the hamlet, where he found the Marquis and the good women of the mansion under some anxiety — the former on account of his absence, the others for the discredit their cookery might sustain by the delay of the supper. All were now at ease, and heard with pleasure that the fire at the castle had burned out of itself without reaching the vaults, which was the only information that Ravenswood thought it proper to give in public concerning the event of his butler's stratagem.

They sat down to an excellent supper. No invitation could prevail on Mr. and Mrs. Girder, even in their own house, to sit down at table with guests of such high quality. They remained standing in the apartment, and acted the part of respectful and careful attendants on the company. Such were the manners of the time. The elder dame, confident through her age and connexion with the Ravenswood family, was less scrupulously ceremonious. She played a mixed part betwixt that of the hostess of an inn and the mistress of a private house, who receives guests above her own degree. She recommended, and even pressed, what she thought best, and was herself easily entreated to take a moderate share of the good cheer, in order to encourage her guests by her own example. Often she interrupted herself, to express her regret that 'my lord did not eat; that the Master was pyking a bare bane; that, to be sure, there was naething there fit to set before their honours; that Lord Allan, rest his saul, used to like a pouthered guse, and said it was Latin for a tass o' brandy; that the brandy came frae France direct; for, for a' the English laws and gaugers, the Wolf's Hope brigs hadna forgotten the gate to Dunkirk.'

Here the cooper admonished his mother-in-law with his elbow, which procured him the following special notice in the progress of her speech:

'Ye needna be dunshin that gate, John,' continued the old lady; 'naebody says that *ye* ken whar the brandy comes frae; and it wadna be fitting ye should, and you the Queen's cooper; and what signifies 't,' continued she, addressing Lord Ravenswood, 'to king, queen, or kaiser whar an auld wife like me buys her pickle sneeshin, or her drap brandy-wine, to haud her heart up?'

Having thus extricated herself from her supposed false step, Dame Loup-the-Dyke proceeded, during the rest of the evening, to supply, with great animation, and very little assistance from her guests, the funds necessary for the support of the conversation, until, declining any further circulation of their glass, her guests requested her permission to retire to their apartments.

The Marquis occupied the chamber of dais, which, in every house above the rank of a mere cottage, was kept sacred for such high occasions as the present. The modern finishing with plaster was then unknown, and tapestry was confined to the houses of the nobility and superior gentry. The cooper, therefore, who was a man of some vanity, as well as some wealth, had imitated the fashion observed by the inferior landholders and clergy, who usually ornamented their state apartments with hangings of a sort of stamped leather, manufactured in the Netherlands, garnished with figures and animals executed in copper foil, and with many a pithy sentence of morality, which, although couched in Low Dutch, were perhaps as much attended to in practice as if written in broad Scotch. The whole had somewhat of a gloomy aspect; but the fire, composed of old pitch-barrel staves, blazed merrily up the chimney; the bed was decorated with linen of most fresh and dazzling whiteness, which had never before been used, and might, perhaps, have never been used at all, but for this high occasion. On the toilette beside, stood an old-fashioned mirror, in a filligree frame, part of the dispersed finery of the neighbouring castle. It was flanked by a long-necked bottle of Florence wine, by which stood a glass nearly as tall, resembling in shape that which Teniers usually places in the hands of his own portrait, when he paints himself as mingling in the revels of a country village. To counterbalance those foreign sentinels, there mounted guard on the other side of the mirror two stout warders of Scottish lineage; a jug, namely, of double ale, which held a Scotch pint, and a quaigh, or bicker, of ivory and ebony, hooped with silver, the work of John Girder's own hands, and the pride of his heart. Besides these preparations against

thirst, there was a goodly diet-loaf, or sweet cake; so that, with such auxiliaries, the apartment seemed victualled against a siege of two or three days.

It only remains to say, that the Marquis's valet was in attendance, displaying his master's brocaded nightgown, and richly embroidered velvet cap, lined and faced with Brussels lace, upon a huge leathern easy-chair, wheeled round so as to have the full advantage of the comfortable fire which we have already mentioned. We therefore commit that eminent person to his night's repose, trusting he profited by the ample preparations made for his accommodation — preparations which we have mentioned in detail, as illustrative of ancient Scottish manners.

It is not necessary we should be equally minute in describing the sleeping apartment of the Master of Ravenswood, which was that usually occupied by the goodman and goodwife themselves. It was comfortably hung with a sort of warm-coloured worsted, manufactured in Scotland, approaching in texture to what is now called shalloon. A staring picture of John Girder himself ornamented this domitory, painted by a starving Frenchman, who had, God knows how or why, strolled over from Flushing or Dunkirk to Wolf's Hope in a smuggling dogger. The features were, indeed, those of the stubborn, opinionative, yet sensible artisan, but Monsieur had contrived to throw a French grace into the look and manner, so utterly inconsistent with the dogged gravity of the original, that it was impossible to look at it without laughing. John and his family, however, piqued themselves not a little upon this picture, and were proportionably censured by the neighbourhood, who pronounced that the cooper, in sitting for the same, and yet more in presuming to hang it up in his bedchamber, had exceeded his privilege as the richest man of the village; at once stept beyond the bounds of his own rank, and encroached upon those of the superior orders; and, in fine, had been guilty of a very overweening act of vanity and presumption. Respect for the memory of my deceased friend, Mr. Richard Tinto, has obliged me to treat this matter at some length; but I spare the reader his prolix though curious observations, as well upon the character of the French school as upon the state of painting in Scotland at the beginning of the 18th century.

The other preparations of the Master's sleeping apartment were similar to those in the chamber of dais.

At the usual early hour of that period, the Marquis of

A —— and his kinsman prepared to resume their journey. This could not be done without an ample breakfast, in which cold meat and hot meat, and oatmeal flummery, wine and spirits, and milk varied by every possible mode of preparation, evinced the same desire to do honour to their guests which had been shown by the hospitable owners of the mansion upon the evening before. All the bustle of preparation for departure now resounded through Wolf's Hope. There was paying of bills and shaking of hands, and saddling of horses, and harnessing of carriages, and distributing of drink-money. The Marquis left a broad piece for the gratification of John Girder's household, which he, the said John, was for some time disposed to convert to his own use; Dingwall, the writer, assuring him he was justified in so doing, seeing he was the disburser of the expenses which were the occasion of the gratification. But, notwithstanding this legal authority, John could not find in his heart to dim the splendour of his late hospitality by pocketing anything in the nature of a gratuity. He only assured his menials he would consider them as a damned ungrateful pack if they bought a gill of brandy elsewhere than out of his own stores; and as the drink-money was likely to go to its legitimate use, he comforted himself that, in this manner, the Marquis's donative would, without any impeachment of credit and character, come ultimately into his own exclusive possession.

While arrangements were making for departure, Ravenswood made blithe the heart of his ancient butler by informing him, cautiously however (for he knew Caleb's warmth of imagination), of the probable change which was about to take place in his fortunes. He deposited with Balderstone, at the same time, the greater part of his slender funds, with an assurance, which he was obliged to reiterate more than once, that he himself had sufficient supplies in certain prospect. He therefore enjoined Caleb, as he valued his favour, to desist from all farther manœuvres against the inhabitants of Wolf's Hope, their cellars, poultry-yards, and substance whatsoever. In this prohibition, the old domestic acquiesced more readily than his master expected.

'It was doubtless,' he said, 'a shame, a discredit, and a sin to harry the puir creatures, when the family were in circumstances to live honourably on their ain means; and there might be wisdom,' he added, 'in giving them a while's breathing time at any rate, that they might be the more readily brought forward upon his honour's future occasions.'

This matter being settled, and having taken an affectionate farewell of his old domestic, the Master rejoined his noble relative, who was now ready to enter his carriage. The two landladies, old and young, having received all kindly greeting a kiss from each of their noble guests, stood simpering at the door of their house, as the coach and six, followed by its train of clattering horsemen, thundered out of the village. John Girder also stood upon his threshold, now looking at his honoured right hand, which had been so lately shaken by a marquis and a lord, and now giving a glance into the interior of his mansion, which manifested all the disarray of the late revel, as if balancing the distinction which he had attained with the expenses of the entertainment.

At length he opened his oracular jaws. 'Let every man and woman here set about their ain business, as if there was nae sic thing as marquis or master, duke or drake, laird or lord, in this world. Let the house be redd up, the broken meat set bye, and if there is ony thing totally uneatable, let it be gien to the puir folk; and, gudemother and wife, I hae just ae thing to entreat ye, that ye will never speak to me a single word, good or bad, anent a' this nonsense wark, but keep a' your cracks about it to yoursells and your kimmers, for my head is weel-nigh dung donnart wi' it already.'

As John's authority was tolerably absolute, all departed to their usual occupations, leaving him to build castles in the air, if he had a mind, upon the court favour which he had acquired by the expenditure of his worldly substance.

CHAPTER XXVII

Why, now I have Dame Fortune by the forelock,
And if she escapes my grasp, the fault is mine;
He that hath buffeted with stern adversity
Best knows to shape his course to favouring breezes.

Old Play.

OUR travellers reached Edinburgh without any farther adventure, and the Master of Ravenswood, as had been previously settled, took up his abode with his noble friend.

In the meantime, the political crisis which had been expected took place, and the Tory party obtained in the Scottish, as in the English, councils of Queen Anne a short-lived ascendency, of which it is not our business to trace either the cause or consequences. Suffice it to say, that it affected the different political parties according to the nature of their principles. In England, many of the High Church party, with Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, at their head, affected to separate their principles from those of the Jacobites, and, on that account, obtained the denomination of Whimsicals. The Scottish High Church party, on the contrary, or, as they termed themselves, the Cavaliers, were more consistent, if not so prudent, in their politics, and viewed all the changes now made as preparatory to calling to the throne, upon the queen's demise, her brother, the Chevalier de St. George. Those who had suffered in his service now entertained the most unreasonable hopes, not only of indemnification, but of vengeance upon their political adversaries; while families attached to the Whig interest saw nothing before them but a renewal of the hardships they had undergone during the reigns of Charles the Second and his brother, and a retaliation of the confiscation which had been inflicted upon the Jacobites during that of King William.

But the most alarmed at the change of system was that prudential set of persons, some of whom are found in all govern-

ments, but who abound in a provincial administration like that of Scotland during the period, and who are what Cromwell called waiters upon Providence, or, in other words, uniform adherents to the party who are uppermost. Many of these hastened to read their recantation to the Marquis of A——; and, as it was easily seen that he took a deep interest in the affairs of his kinsman, the Master of Ravenswood, they were the first to suggest measures for retrieving at least a part of his property, and for restoring him in blood against his father's attainder.

Old Lord Turntippet professed to be one of the most anxious for the success of these measures: for 'it grieved him to the very saul,' he said, 'to see so brave a young gentleman, of sic auld and undoubted nobility, and, what was mair than a' that, a bluid relation of the Marquis of A——, the man whom,' he swore, 'he honoured most upon the face of the yearth, brought to so severe a pass. For his ain puir peculiar,' as he said, 'and to contribute something to the rehabilitation of sae auld ane house,' the said Turntippit sent in three family pictures lacking the frames, and six high-backed chairs, with worked Turkey cushions, having the crest of Ravenswood broidered thereon, without charging a penny either of the principal or interest they had cost him, when he bought them, sixteen years before, at a roup of the furniture of Lord Ravenswood's lodgings in the Canongate.

Much more to Lord Turntippet's dismay than to his surprise, although he affected to feel more of the latter than the former, the Marquis received his gift very drily, and observed, that his lordship's restitution, if he expected it to be received by the Master of Ravenswood and his friends, must comprehend a pretty large farm, which, having been mortgaged to Turntippet for a very inadequate sum, he had contrived, during the confusion of the family affairs, a[illegible]d by means well understood by the lawyers of that period, to acquire to himself in absolute property.

The old time-serving lord winced excessively under this requisition, protesting to God, that he saw no occasion the lad could have for the instant possession of the land, seeing he would doubtless now recover the bulk of his estate from Sir William Ashton, to which he was ready to contribute by every means in his power, as was just and reasonable; and finally declaring, that he was willing to settle the land on the young gentleman after his own natural demise.

But all these excuses availed nothing, and he was compelled

to disgorge the property, on receiving back the sum for which it had been mortgaged. Having no other means of making peace with the higher powers, he returned home sorrowful and malcontent, complaining to his confidants, 'That every mutation or change in the state had hitherto been productive of some sma' advantage to him in his ain quiet affairs; but that the present had — pize upon it! — cost him one of the best pen feathers o' his wing.'

Similar measures were threatened against others who had profited by the wreck of the fortune of Ravenswood; and Sir William Ashton, in particular, was menaced with an appeal to the House of Peers, against the judicial sentences, under which he held the castle and barony of Ravenswood. With him, however, the Master, as well for Lucy's sake as on account of the hospitality he had received from him, felt himself under the necessity of proceeding with great candour. He wrote to the late Lord Keeper, for he no longer held that office, stating frankly the engagement which existed between him and Miss Ashton, requesting his permission for their union, and assuring him of his willingness to put the settlement of all matters between them upon such a footing as Sir William himself should think favourable.

The same messenger was charged with a letter to Lady Ashton, deprecating any cause of displeasure which the Master might unintentionally have given her, enlarging upon his attachment to Miss Ashton, and the length to which it had proceeded, and conjuring the lady, as a Douglas in nature as well as in name, generously to forget ancient prejudices and misunderstandings, and to believe that the family had acquired a friend, and she herself a respectful and attached humble servant, in him who subscribed himself 'Edgar, Master of Ravenswood.'

A third letter Ravenswood addressed to Lucy, and the messenger was instructed to find some secret and secure means of delivering it into her own hands. It contained the strongest protestations of continued affection, and dwelt upon the approaching change of the writer's fortunes, as chiefly valuable by tending to remove the impediments to their union. He related the steps he had taken to overcome the prejudices of her parents, and especially of her mother, and expressed his hopes they might prove effectual. If not, he still trusted that his absence from Scotland upon an important and honourable mission might give time for prejudices to die away; while he hoped and

trusted Miss Ashton's constancy, on which he had the most implicit reliance, would battle any effort that might be used to divert her attachment. Much more there was, which, however interesting to the lovers themselves, would afford the reader neither interest nor information. To each of these three letters the Master of Ravenswood received an answer, but by different means of conveyance, and certainly couched in very different styles.

Lady Ashton answered his letter by his own messenger, who was not allowed to remain at Ravenswood a moment longer than she was engaged in penning these lines. 'For the hand of Mr. Ravenswood of Wolf's Crag — These :

'SIR, UNKNOWN,

'I have received a letter, signed "Edgar, Master of Ravenswood," concerning the writer whereof I am uncertain, seeing that the honours of such a family were forfeited for high treason in the person of Allan, late Lord Ravenswood. Sir, if you shall happen to be the person so subscribing yourself, you will please to know, that I claim the full interest of a parent in Miss Lucy Ashton, which I have disposed of irrevocably in behalf of a worthy person. And, sir, were this otherwise, I would not listen to a proposal from you, or any of your house, seeing their hand has been uniformly held up against the freedom of the subject and the immunities of God's kirk. Sir, it is not a flightering blink of prosperity which can change my constant opinion in this regard, seeing it has been my lot before now, like holy David, to see the wicked great in power and flourishing like a green bay-tree ; nevertheless I passed, and they were not, and the place thereof knew them no more. Wishing you to lay these things to your heart for your own sake, so far as they may concern you, I pray you to take no farther notice of her who desires to remain your unknown servant,

'MARGARET DOUGLAS,
'otherwise ASHTON.'

About two days after he had received this very unsatisfactory epistle, the Master of Ravenswood, while walking up the High Street of Edinburgh, was jostled by a person, in whom, as the man pulled off his hat to make an apology, he recognised Lockhard, the confidential domestic of Sir William Ashton. The man bowed, slipt a letter into his hand, and disappeared. The packet contained four close-written folios, from which, however,

as is sometimes incident to the compositions of great lawyers, little could be extracted, excepting that the writer felt himself in a very puzzling predicament.

Sir William spoke at length of his high value and regard for his dear young friend, the Master of Ravenswood, and of his very extreme high value and regard for the Marquis of A——, his very dear old friend; he trusted that any measures that they might adopt, in which he was concerned, would be carried on with due regard to the sanctity of decreets and judgments obtained *in foro contentioso*; protesting, before men and angels, that if the law of Scotland, as declared in her supreme courts, were to undergo a reversal in the English House of Lords, the evils which would thence arise to the public would inflict a greater wound upon his heart than any loss he might himself sustain by such irregular proceedings. He flourished much on generosity and forgiveness of mutual injuries, and hinted at the mutability of human affairs, always favourite topics with the weaker party in politics. He pathetically lamented, and gently censured, the haste which had been used in depriving him of his situation of Lord Keeper,[1] which his experience had enabled him to fill with some advantage to the public, without so much as giving him an opportunity of explaining how far his own views of general politics might essentially differ from those now in power. He was convinced the Marquis of A—— had as sincere intentions toward the public as himself or any man; and if, upon a conference, they could have agreed upon the measures by which it was to be pursued, his experience and his interest should have gone to support the present administration. Upon the engagement betwixt Ravenswood and his daughter, he spoke in a dry and confused manner. He regretted so premature a step as the engagement of the young people should have been taken, and conjured the Master to remember he had never given any encouragement thereunto; and observed that, as a transaction *inter minores*, and without concurrence of his daughter's natural curators, the engagement was inept, and void in law. This precipitate measure, he added, had produced a very bad effect upon Lady Ashton's mind, which it was impossible at present to remove. Her son, Colonel Douglas Ashton, had embraced her prejudices in the fullest extent, and it was impossible for Sir William to adopt a course disagreeable to them without a fatal and irreconcilable breach in his family;

[1] This obviously cannot apply to Sir James Dalrymple, Lord Stair, who was then dead, and had never been deprived of any such office (*Laing*).

which was not at present to be thought of. Time, the great physician, he hoped, would mend all.

In a postscript, Sir William said something more explicitly, which seemed to intimate that, rather than the law of Scotland should sustain a severe wound through his sides, by a reversal of the judgment of her supreme courts, in the case of the barony of Ravenswood, through the intervention of what, with all submission, he must term a foreign court of appeal, he himself would extrajudicially consent to considerable sacrifices.

From Lucy Ashton, by some unknown conveyance, the Master received the following lines: 'I received yours, but it was at the utmost risk; do not attempt to write again till better times. I am sore beset, but I will be true to my word, while the exercise of my reason is vouchsafed to me. That you are happy and prosperous is some consolation, and my situation requires it all.' The note was signed 'L. A.'

This letter filled Ravenswood with the most lively alarm. He made many attempts, notwithstanding her prohibition, to convey letters to Miss Ashton, and even to obtain an interview; but his plans were frustrated, and he had only the mortification to learn that anxious and effectual precautions had been taken to prevent the possibility of their correspondence. The Master was the more distressed by these circumstances, as it became impossible to delay his departure from Scotland, upon the important mission which had been confided to him. Before his departure, he put Sir William Ashton's letter into the hands of the Marquis of A——, who observed with a smile, that Sir William's day of grace was past, and that he had now to learn which side of the hedge the sun had got to. It was with the greatest difficulty that Ravenswood extorted from the Marquis a promise that he would compromise the proceedings in Parliament, providing Sir William should be disposed to acquiesce in a union between him and Lucy Ashton.

'I would hardly,' said the Marquis, 'consent to your throwing away your birthright in this manner, were I not perfectly confident that Lady Ashton, or Lady Douglas, or whatever she calls herself, will, as Scotchmen say, keep her threep; and that her husband dares not contradict her.'

'But yet,' said the Master, 'I trust your lordship will consider my engagement as sacred.'

'Believe my word of honour,' said the Marquis, 'I would be a friend even to your follies; and having thus told you *my*

opinion, I will endeavour, as occasion offers, to serve you according to your own.'

The Master of Ravenswood could but thank his generous kinsman and patron, and leave him full power to act in all his affairs. He departed from Scotland upon his mission, which, it was supposed, might detain him upon the continent for some months.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her.

Richard III.

TWELVE months had passed away since the Master of Ravenswood's departure for the continent, and, although his return to Scotland had been expected in a much shorter space, yet the affairs of his mission, or, according to a prevailing report, others of a nature personal to himself, still detained him abroad. In the meantime, the altered state of affairs in Sir William Ashton's family may be gathered from the following conversation which took place betwixt Bucklaw and his confidential bottle companion and dependant, the noted Captain Craigengelt.

They were seated on either side of the huge sepulchral-looking freestone chimney in the low hall at Girnington. A wood fire blazed merrily in the grate; a round oaken table, placed between them, supported a stoup of excellent claret, two rummer glasses, and other good cheer; and yet, with all these appliances and means to boot, the countenance of the patron was dubious, doubtful, and unsatisfied, while the invention of his dependant was taxed to the utmost to parry what he most dreaded, a fit, as he called it, of the sullens, on the part of his protector. After a long pause, only interrupted by the devil's tattoo, which Bucklaw kept beating against the hearth with the toe of his boot, Craigengelt at last ventured to break silence. 'May I be double distanced,' said he, 'if ever I saw a man in my life have less the air of a bridegroom! Cut me out of feather, if you have not more the look of a man condemned to be hanged!'

'My kind thanks for the compliment,' replied Bucklaw; 'but I suppose you think upon the predicament in which you yourself are most likely to be placed: and pray, Captain Craigengelt, if it please your worship, why should I look merry, when I'm sad, and devilish sad too?'

'And that 's what vexes me,' said Craingengelt. 'Here is this match, the best in the whole country, and which you were so anxious about, is on the point of being concluded, and you are as sulky as a bear that has lost its whelps.'

'I do not know,' answered the Laird, doggedly, 'whether I should conclude it or not, if it was not that I am too far forwards to leap back.'

'Leap back!' exclaimed Craigengelt, with a well-assumed air of astonishment, 'that would be playing the back-game with a witness! Leap back! Why, is not the girl's fortune ——'

'The young lady's, if you please,' said Hayston, interrupting him.

'Well — well, no disrespect meant. Will Miss Ashton's tocher not weigh against any in Lothian?'

'Granted,' answered Bucklaw; 'but I care not a penny for her tocher; I have enough of my own.'

'..nd the mother, that loves you like her own child?'

'Better than some of her children, I believe,' said Bucklaw, 'or there would be little love wared on the matter.'

'And Colonel Sholto Douglas Ashton, who desires the marriage above all earthly things?'

'Because,' said Bucklaw, 'he expects to carry the county of —— through my interest.'

'And the father, who is as keen to see the match concluded as ever I have been to win a main?'

'Ay,' said Bucklaw, in the same disparaging manner, 'it lies with Sir William's policy to secure the next best match, since he cannot barter his child to save the great Ravenswood estate, which the English House of Lords are about to wrench out of his clutches.'

'What say you to the young lady herself?' said Craigengelt: 'the finest young woman in all Scotland, one that you used to be so fond of when she was cross, and now she consents to have you, and gives up her engagement with Ravenswood, you are for jibbing. I must say, the devil 's in ye, when ye neither know what you would have nor what you would want.'

'I 'll tell you my meaning in a word,' answered Bucklaw, getting up and walking through the room; 'I want to know what the devil is the cause of Miss Ashton's changing her mind so suddenly?'

'And what need you care,' said Craigengelt, 'since the change is in your favour?'

'I'll tell you what it is,' returned his patron, 'I never knew much of that sort of fine ladies, and I believe they may be as capricious as the devil; but there is something in Miss Ashton's change a devilish deal too sudden and too serious for a mere flisk of her own. I'll be bound, Lady Ashton understands every machine for breaking in the human mind, and there are as many as there are cannon-bits, martingales, and cavessons for young colts.'

'And if that were not the case,' said Craigengelt, 'how the devil should we ever get them into training at all?'

'And that's true too,' said Bucklaw, suspending his march through the dining-room, and leaning upon the back of a chair. 'And besides, here's Ravenswood in the way still; do you think he'll give up Lucy's engagement?'

'To be sure he will,' answered Craigengelt; 'what good can it do him to refuse, since he wishes to marry another woman and she another man?'

'And you believe seriously,' said Bucklaw, 'that he is going to marry the foreign lady we heard of?'

'You heard yourself,' answered Craigengelt, 'what Captain Westenho said about it, and the great preparation made for their blithesome bridal.'

'Captain Westenho,' replied Bucklaw, 'has rather too much of your own cast about him, Craigie, to make what Sir William would call a "famous witness." He drinks deep, plays deep, swears deep, and I suspect can lie and cheat a little into the bargain; useful qualities, Craigie, if kept in their proper sphere, but which have a little too much of the freebooter to make a figure in a court of evidence.'

'Well, then,' said Craigengelt, 'will you believe Colonel Douglas Ashton, who heard the Marquis of A—— say in a public circle, but not aware that he was within ear-shot, that his kinsman had made a better arrangement for himself than to give his father's land for the pale-cheeked daughter of a broken-down fanatic, and that Bucklaw was welcome to the wearing of Ravenswood's slaughled shoes.'

'Did he say so, by heavens!' cried Bucklaw, breaking out into one of those uncontrollable fits of passion to which he was constitutionally subject; 'if I had heard him, I would have torn the tongue out of his throat before all his pets and minions, and Highland bullies into the bargain. Why did not Ashton run him through the body?'

'Capot me if I know,' said the Captain. 'He deserved it

sure enough; but he is an old man, and a minister of state, and there would be more risk than credit in meddling with him. You had more need to think of making up to Miss Lucy Ashton the disgrace that 's like to fall upon her than of interfering with a man too old to fight, and on too high a stool for your hand to reach him.'

'It *shall* reach him, though, one day,' said Bucklaw, 'and his kinsman Ravenswood to boot. In the meantime, I 'll take care Miss Ashton receives no discredit for the slight they have put upon her. It 's an awkward job, however, and I wish it were ended; I scarce know how to talk to her, — but fill a bumper, Craigie, and we 'll drink her health. It grows late, and a night-cowl of good claret is worth all the considering caps in Europe.'

CHAPTER XXIX

It was the copy of our conference.
In bed she slept not, for my urging it;
At board she fed not, for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced at it.

Comedy of Errors.

THE next morning saw Bucklaw and his faithful Achates, Craigengelt, at Ravenswood Castle. They were most courteously received by the knight and his lady, as well as by their son and heir, Colonel Ashton. After a good deal of stammering and blushing — for Bucklaw, notwithstanding his audacity in other matters, had all the sheepish bashfulness common to those who have lived little in respectable society — he contrived at length to explain his wish to be admitted to a conference with Miss Ashton upon the subject of their approaching union. Sir William and his son looked at Lady Ashton, who replied with the greatest composure, 'That Lucy would wait upon Mr. Hayston directly. I hope,' she added with a smile, 'that as Lucy is very young, and has been lately trepanned into an engagement of which she is now heartily ashamed, our dear Bucklaw will excuse her wish that I should be present at their interview?'

'In truth, my dear lady,' said Bucklaw, 'it is the very thing that I would have desired on my own account; for I have been so little accustomed to what is called gallantry, that I shall certainly fall into some cursed mistake unless I have the advantage of your ladyship as an interpreter.'

It was thus that Bucklaw, in the perturbation of his embarrassment upon this critical occasion, forgot the just apprehensions he had entertained of Lady Ashton's overbearing ascendency over her daughter's mind, and lost an opportunity of ascertaining, by his own investigation, the real state of Lucy's feelings.

The other gentlemen left the room, and in a short time Lady

Ashton, followed by her daughter, entered the apartment. She appeared, as he had seen her on former occasions, rather composed than agitated; but a nicer judge than he could scarce have determined whether her calmness was that of despair or of indifference. Bucklaw was too much agitated by his own feelings minutely to scrutinise those of the lady. He stammered out an unconnected address, confounding together the two or three topics to which it related, and stopt short before he brought it to any regular conclusion. Miss Ashton listened, or looked as if she listened, but returned not a single word in answer, continuing to fix her eyes on a small piece of embroidery on which, as if by instinct or habit, her fingers were busily employed. Lady Ashton sat at some distance, almost screened from notice by the deep embrasure of the window in which she had placed her chair. From this she whispered, in a tone of voice which, though soft and sweet, had something in it of admonition, if not command — 'Lucy, my dear, remember — have you heard what Bucklaw has been saying?'

The idea of her mother's presence seemed to have slipped from the unhappy girl's recollection. She started, dropped her needle, and repeated hastily, and almost in the same breath, the contradictory answers, 'Yes, madam — no, my lady — I beg pardon, I did not hear.'

'You need not blush, my love, and still less need you look so pale and frightened,' said Lady Ashton, coming forward; 'we know that maiden's ears must be slow in receiving a gentleman's language; but you must remember Mr. Hayston speaks on a subject on which you have long since agreed to give him a favourable hearing. You know how much your father and I have our hearts set upon an event so extremely desirable.'

In Lady Ashton's voice, a tone of impressive, and even stern, innuendo was sedulously and skilfully concealed under an appearance of the most affectionate maternal tenderness. The manner was for Bucklaw, who was easily enough imposed upon; the matter of the exhortation was for the terrified Lucy, who well knew how to interpret her mother's hints, however skilfully their real purport might be veiled from general observation.

Miss Ashton sat upright in her chair, cast round her a glance in which fear was mingled with a still wilder expression, but remained perfectly silent. Bucklaw, who had in the meantime paced the room to and fro, until he had recovered his composure, now stopped within two or three yards of her chair, and broke

out as follows; 'I believe I have been a d—d fool, Miss Ashton; I have tried to speak to you as people tell me young ladies like to be talked to, and I don't think you comprehend what I have been saying; and no wonder, for d—n me if I understand it myself! But, however, once for all, and in broad Scotch, your father and mother like what is proposed, and if you can take a plain young fellow for your husband, who will never cross you in anything you have a mind to, I will place you at the head of the best establishment in the three Lothians; you shall have Lady Girnington's lodging in the Canongate of Edinburgh, go where you please, do what you please, and see what you please — and that 's fair. Only I must have a corner at the board-end for a worthless old playfellow of mine, whose company I would rather want than have, if it were not that the d—d fellow has persuaded me that I can't do without him; and so I hope you won't except against Craigie, although it might be easy to find much better company.'

'Now, out upon you, Bucklaw,' said Lady Ashton, again interposing; 'how can you think Lucy can have any objection to that blunt, honest, good-natured creature, Captain Craigengelt?'

'Why, madam,' replied Bucklaw, 'as to Craigie's sincerity, honesty, and good-nature, they are, I believe, pretty much upon a par; but that 's neither here nor there — the fellow knows my ways, and has got useful to me, and I cannot well do without him, as I said before. But all this is nothing to the purpose; for, since I have mustered up courage to make a plain proposal, I would fain hear Miss Ashton, from her own lips, give me a plain answer.'

'My dear Bucklaw,' said Lady Ashton, 'let me spare Lucy's bashfulness. I tell you, in her presence, that she has already consented to be guided by her father and me in this matter. Lucy, my love,' she added, with that singular combination of suavity of tone and pointed energy which we have already noticed — 'Lucy, my dearest love! speak for yourself, is it not as I say?'

Her victim answered in a tremulous and hollow voice, 'I *have* promised to obey you — but upon one condition.'

'She means,' said Lady Ashton, turning to Bucklaw, 'she expects an answer to the demand which she has made upon the man at Vienna, or Ratisbon, or Paris — or where is he? — for restitution of the engagement in which he had the art to involve her. You will not, I am sure, my dear friend, think it is wrong

that she should feel much delicacy upon this head; indeed, it concerns us all.'

'Perfectly right — quite fair,' said Bucklaw, half humming, half speaking the end of the old song —

> 'It is best to be off wi' the old love
> Before you be on wi' the new.

But I thought,' said he, pausing, 'you might have had an answer six times told from Ravenswood. D—n me, if I have not a mind to go and fetch one myself, if Miss Ashton will honour me with the commission.'

'By no means,' said Lady Ashton; 'we have had the utmost difficulty of preventing Douglas, for whom it would be more proper, from taking so rash a step; and do you think we could permit you, my good friend, almost equally dear to us, to go to a desperate man upon an errand so desperate? In fact, all the friends of the family are of opinion, and my dear Lucy herself ought so to think, that, as this unworthy person has returned no answer to her letter, silence must on this, as in other cases, be held to give consent, and a contract must be supposed to be given up, when the party waives insisting upon it. Sir William, who should know best, is clear upon this subject; and therefore, my dear Lucy ——'

'Madam,' said Lucy, with unwonted energy, 'urge me no farther; if this unhappy engagement be restored, I have already said you shall dispose of me as you will; till then I should commit a heavy sin in the sight of God and man in doing what you require.'

'But, my love, if this man remains obstinately silent —

'He will *not* be silent,' answered Lucy; 'it is six weeks since I sent him a double of my former letter by a sure hand.

'You have not — you could not — you durst not,' said Lady Ashton, with violence inconsistent with the tone she had intended to assume; but instantly correcting herself, 'My dearest Lucy,' said she, in her sweetest tone of expostulation, 'how could you think of such a thing?'

'No matter,' said Bucklaw; 'I respect Miss Ashton for her sentiments, and I only wish I had been her messenger myself.

'And pray how long, Miss Ashton,' said her mother, ironically, 'are we to wait the return of your Pacolet — your fairy messenger — since our humble couriers of flesh and blood could not be trusted in this matter?'

'I have numbered weeks, days, hours, and minutes,' said

Miss Ashton: 'within another week I shall have an answer, unless he is dead. Till that time, sir,' she said, addressing Bucklaw, 'let me be thus far beholden to you, that you will beg my mother to forbear me upon this subject.'

'I will make it my particular entreaty to Lady Ashton,' said Bucklaw. 'By my honour, madam, I respect your feelings; and, although the prosecution of this affair be rendered dearer to me than ever, yet, as I am a gentleman, I would renounce it, were it so urged as to give you a moment's pain.'

'Mr. Hayston, I think, cannot apprehend that,' said Lady Ashton, looking pale with anger, 'when the daughter's happiness lies in the bosom of the mother. Let me ask you, Miss Ashton, in what terms your last letter was couched?'

'Exactly in the same, madam,' answered Lucy, 'which you dictated on a former occasion.'

'When eight days have elapsed, then,' said her mother, resuming her tone of tenderness, 'we shall hope, my dearest love, that you will end this suspense.'

'Miss Ashton must not be hurried, madam,' said Bucklaw, whose bluntness of feeling did not by any means arise from want of good-nature; 'messengers may be stopped or delayed. I have known a day's journey broke by the casting of a foreshoe. Stay, let me see my calendar: the twentieth day from this is St. Jude's, and the day before I must be at Caverton Edge, to see the match between the Laird of Kittlegirth's black mare and Johnston the meal monger's four-year-old colt; but I can ride all night, or Craigie can bring me word how the match goes; and I hope, in the meantime, as I shall not myself distress Miss Ashton with any further importunity, that your ladyship yourself, and Sir William, and Colonel Douglas will have the goodness to allow her uninterrupted time for making up her mind.'

'Sir,' said Miss Ashton, 'you are generous.'

'As for that, madam,' answered Bucklaw, 'I only pretend to be a plain, good-humoured young fellow, as I said before, who will willingly make you happy if you will permit him, and show him how to do so.'

Having said this, he saluted her with more emotion than was consistent with his usual train of feeling, and took his leave; Lady Ashton, as she accompanied him out of the apartment, assuring him that her daughter did full justice to the sincerity of his attachment, and requesting him to see Sir William before his departure, 'since,' as she said, with a keen

glance reverting towards Lucy, 'against St. Jude's day, we must all be ready to *sign and seal*.'

'To sign and seal!' echoed Lucy in a muttering tone, as the door of the apartment closed — 'to sign and seal — to do and die!' and, clasping her extenuated hands together, she sunk back on the easy-chair she occupied, in a state resembling stupor.

From this she was shortly after awakened by the boisterous entry of her brother Henry, who clamorously reminded her of a promise to give him two yards of carnation ribbon to make knots to his new garters. With the most patient composure Lucy arose, and opening a little ivory cabinet, sought out the ribbon the lad wanted, measured it accurately, cut it off into proper lengths, and knotted it into the fashion his boyish whim required.

'Dinna shut the cabinet yet,' said Henry, 'for I must have some of your silver wire to fasten the bells to my hawk's jesses, — and yet the new falcon 's not worth them neither; for do you know, after all the plague we had to get her from an eyrie, all the way at Posso, in Mannor Water, she 's going to prove, after all, nothing better than a rifler: she just wets her singles in the blood of the partridge, and then breaks away, and lets her fly; and what good can the poor bird do after that, you know, except pine and die in the first heather-cow or whin-bush she can crawl into?'

'Right, Henry — right — very right,' said Lucy, mournfully, holding the boy fast by the hand, after she had given him the wire he wanted; 'but there are more riflers in the world than your falcon, and more wounded birds that seek but to die in quiet, that can find neither brake nor whin-bush to hide their heads in.'

'Ah! that 's some speech out of your romances,' said the boy; 'and Sholto says they have turned your head. But I hear Norman whistling to the hawk; I must go fasten on the jesses.'

And he scampered away with the thoughtless gaiety of boyhood, leaving his sister to the bitterness of her own reflections.

'It is decreed,' she said, 'that every living creature, even those who owe me most kindness, are to shun me, and leave me to those by whom I am beset. It is just it should be thus. Alone and uncounselled, I involved myself in these perils: alone and uncounselled, I must extricate myself or die.'

CHAPTER XXX

What doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair,
And, at her heels, a huge infectious troop
Of pale distemperatures, and foes to life!

Comedy of Errors.

As some vindication of the ease with which Bucklaw (who otherwise, as he termed himself, was really a very good-humoured fellow) resigned his judgment to the management of Lady Ashton, while paying his addresses to her daughter, the reader must call to mind the strict domestic discipline which, at this period, was exercised over the females of a Scottish family.

The manners of the country in this, as in many other respects, coincided with those of France before the Revolution. Young women of the higher ranks seldom mingled in society until after marriage, and, both in law and fact, were held to be under the strict tutelage of their parents, who were too apt to enforce the views for their settlement in life without paying any regard to the inclination of the parties chiefly interested. On such occasions, the suitor expected little more from his bride than a silent acquiescence in the will of her parents; and as few opportunities of acquaintance, far less of intimacy, occurred, he made his choice by the outside, as the lovers in the *Merchant of Venice* select the casket, contented to trust to chance the issue of the lottery in which he had hazarded a venture.

It was not therefore surprising, such being the general manners of the age, that Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw, whom dissipated habits had detached in some degree from the best society, should not attend particularly to those feelings in his elected bride to which many men of more sentiment, experience, and reflection would, in all probability, have been equally indifferent. He knew what all accounted the principal point,

that her parents and friends, namely, were decidedly in his favour, and there existed most powerful reasons for their predilection.

In truth, the conduct of the Marquis of A——, since Ravenswood's departure, had been such as almost to bar the possibility of his kinsman's union with Lucy Ashton. The Marquis was Ravenswood's sincere but misjudging friend, or rather, like many friends and patrons, he consulted what he considered to be his relation's true interest, although he knew that in doing so he run counter to his inclinations.

The Marquis drove on, therefore, with the plenitude of ministerial authority, an appeal to the British House of Peers against those judgments of the courts of law by which Sir William became possessed of Ravenswood's hereditary property. As this measure, enforced with all the authority of power, was new in Scottish judicial proceedings, though now so frequently resorted to, it was exclaimed against by the lawyers on the opposite side of politics, as an interference with the civil judicature of the country, equally new, arbitrary, and tyrannical. And if it thus affected even strangers connected with them only by political party, it may be guessed what the Ashton family themselves said and thought under so gross a dispensation. Sir William, still more worldly-minded than he was timid, was reduced to despair by the loss by which he was threatened. His son's haughtier spirit was exalted into rage at the idea of being deprived of his expected patrimony. But to Lady Ashton's yet more vindictive temper the conduct of Ravenswood, or rather of his patron, appeared to be an offence challenging the deepest and most mortal revenge. Even the quiet and confiding temper of Lucy herself, swayed by the opinions expressed by all around her, could not but consider the conduct of Ravenswood as precipitate, and even unkind. 'It was my father,' she repeated with a sigh, 'who welcomed him to this place, and encouraged, or at least allowed, the intimacy between us. Should he not have remembered this, and requited it with at least some moderate degree of procrastination in the assertion of his own alleged rights? I would have forfeited for him double the value of these lands, which he pursues with an ardour that shows he has forgotten how much I am implicated in the matter.'

Lucy, however, could only murmur these things to herself, unwilling to increase the prejudices against her lover entertained by all around her, who exclaimed against the step

pursued on his account as illegal, vexatious, and tyrannical, resembling the worst measures in the worst times of the worst Stuarts, and a degradation of Scotland, the decisions of whose learned judges were thus subjected to the review of a court composed indeed of men of the highest rank, but who were not trained to the study of any municipal law, and might be supposed specially to hold in contempt that of Scotland. As a natural consequence of the alleged injustice meditated towards her father, every means was resorted to, and every argument urged, to induce Miss Ashton to break off her engagement with Ravenswood, as being scandalous, shameful, and sinful, formed with the mortal enemy of her family, and calculated to add bitterness to the distress of her parents.

Lucy's spirit, however, was high, and, although unaided and alone, she could have borne much: she could have endured the repinings of her father; his murmurs against what he called the tyrannical usage of the ruling party; his ceaseless charges of ingratitude against Ravenswood; his endless lectures on the various means by which contracts may be voided and annulled; his quotations from the civil, the municipal, and the canon law; and his prelections upon the *patria potestas*.

She might have borne also in patience, or repelled with scorn, the bitter taunts and occasional violence of her brother, Colonel Douglas Ashton, and the impertinent and intrusive interference of other friends and relations. But it was beyond her power effectually to withstand or elude the constant and unceasing persecution of Lady Ashton, who, laying every other wish aside, had bent the whole efforts of her powerful mind to break her daughter's contract with Ravenswood, and to place a perpetual bar between the lovers, by effecting Lucy's union with Bucklaw. Far more deeply skilled than her husband in the recesses of the human heart, she was aware that in this way she might strike a blow of deep and decisive vengeance upon one whom she esteemed as her mortal enemy; nor did she hesitate at raising her arm, although she knew that the wound must be dealt through the bosom of her daughter. With this stern and fixed purpose, she sounded every deep and shallow of her daughter's soul, assumed alternately every disguise of manner which could serve her object, and prepared at leisure every species of dire machinery by which the human mind can be wrenched from its settled determination. Some of these were of an obvious description, and require only to be cursorily mentioned; others were characteristic of

the time, the country, and the persons engaged in this singular drama.

It was of the last consequence that all intercourse betwixt the lovers should be stopped, and, by dint of gold and authority, Lady Ashton contrived to possess herself of such a complete command of all who were placed around her daughter, that, in fact, no leaguered fortress was ever more completely blockaded; while, at the same time, to all outward appearance Miss Ashton lay under no restriction. The verge of her parents' domains became, in respect to her, like the viewless and enchanted line drawn around a fairy castle, where nothing unpermitted can either enter from without or escape from within. Thus every letter, in which Ravenswood conveyed to Lucy Ashton the indispensable reasons which detained him abroad, and more than one note which poor Lucy had addressed to him through what she thought a secure channel, fell into the hands of her mother. It could not be but that the tenor of these intercepted letters, especially those of Ravenswood, should contain something to irritate the passions and fortify the obstinacy of her into whose hands they fell; but Lady Ashton's passions were too deep-rooted to require this fresh food. She burnt the papers as regularly as she perused them; and as they consumed into vapour and tinder, regarded them with a smile upon her compressed lips, and an exultation in her steady eye, which showed her confidence that the hopes of the writers should soon be rendered equally unsubstantial.

It usually happens that fortune aids the machinations of those who are prompt to avail themselves of every chance that offers. A report was wafted from the continent, founded, like others of the same sort, upon many plausible circumstances, but without any real basis, stating the Master of Ravenswood to be on the eve of marriage with a foreign lady of fortune and distinction. This was greedily caught up by both the political parties, who were at once struggling for power and for popular favour, and who seized, as usual, upon the most private circumstances in the lives of each other's partizans to convert them into subjects of political discussion.

The Marquis of A—— gave his opinion aloud and publicly, not indeed in the coarse terms ascribed to him by Captain Craigengelt, but in a manner sufficiently offensive to the Ashtons. 'He thought the report,' he said, 'highly probable, and heartily wished it might be true. Such a match was fitter and far more creditable for a spirited young fellow than a

marriage with the daughter of an old Whig lawyer, whose chicanery had so nearly ruined his father.'

The other party, of course, laying out of view the opposition which the Master of Ravenswood received from Miss Ashton's family, cried shame upon his fickleness and perfidy, as if he had seduced the young lady into an engagement, and wilfully and causelessly abandoned her for another.

Sufficient care was taken that this report should find its way to Ravenswood Castle through every various channel, Lady Ashton being well aware that the very reiteration of the same rumour, from so many quarters, could not but give it a semblance of truth. By some it was told as a piece of ordinary news, by some communicated as serious intelligence: now it was whispered to Lucy Ashton's ear in the tone of malignant pleasantry, and now transmitted to her as a matter of grave and serious warning.

Even the boy Henry was made the instrument of adding to his sister's torments. One morning he rushed into the room with a willow branch in his hand, which he told her had arrived that instant from Germany for her special wearing. Lucy, as we have seen, was remarkably fond of her younger brother, and at that moment his wanton and thoughtless unkindness seemed more keenly injurious than even the studied insults of her elder brother. Her grief, however, had no shade of resentment: she folded her arms about the boy's neck, and saying faintly, 'Poor Henry! you speak but what they tell you,' she burst into a flood of unrestrained tears. The boy was moved, notwithstanding the thoughtlessness of his age and character. 'The devil take me,' said he, 'Lucy, if I fetch you any more of these tormenting messages again; for I like you better,' said he, kissing away the tears, 'than the whole pack of them; and you shall have my grey pony to ride on, and you shall canter him if you like, —ay, and ride beyond the village, too, if you have a mind.'

'Who told you,' said Lucy, 'that I am not permitted to ride where I please?'

'That 's a secret,' said the boy; 'but you will find you can never ride beyond the village but your horse will cast a shoe, or fall lame, or the castle bell will ring, or something will happen to bring you back. But if I tell you more of these things, Douglas will not get me the pair of colours they have promised me, and so good-morrow to you.'

This dialogue plunged Lucy in still deeper dejection, as it tended to show her plainly what she had for some time suspected, that she was little better than a prisoner at large in her

father's house. We have described her in the outset of our story as of a romantic disposition, delighting in tales of love and wonder, and readily identifying herself with the situation of those legendary heroines with whose adventures, for want of better reading, her memory had become stocked. The fairy wand, with which in her solitude she had delighted to raise visions of enchantment, became now the rod of a magician, the bond slave of evil genii, serving only to invoke spectres at which the exorcist trembled. She felt herself the object of suspicion, of scorn, of dislike at least, if not of hatred, to her own family: and it seemed to her that she was abandoned by the very person on whose account she was exposed to the enmity of all around her. Indeed, the evidence of Ravenswood's infidelity began to assume every day a more determined character.

A soldier of fortune, of the name of Westenho, an old familiar of Craigengelt's, chanced to arrive from abroad about this time. The worthy Captain, though without any precise communication with Lady Ashton, always acted most regularly and sedulously in support of her plans, and easily prevailed upon his friend, by dint of exaggeration of real circumstances and coining of others, to give explicit testimony to the truth of Ravenswood's approaching marriage.

Thus beset on all hands, and in a manner reduced to despair, Lucy's temper gave way under the pressure of constant affliction and persecution. She became gloomy and abstracted, and, contrary to her natural and ordinary habit of mind, sometimes turned with spirit, and even fierceness, on those by whom she was long and closely annoyed. Her health also began to be shaken, and her hectic cheek and wandering eye gave symptoms of what is called a fever upon the spirits. In most mothers this would have moved compassion; but Lady Ashton, compact and firm of purpose, saw these waverings of health and intellect with no greater sympathy than that with which the hostile engineer regards the towers of a beleaguered city as they reel under the discharge of his artillery; or rather, she considered these starts and inequalities of temper as symptoms of Lucy's expiring resolution; as the angler, by the throes and convulsive exertions of the fish which he has hooked, becomes aware that he soon will be able to land him. To accelerate the catastrophe in the present case, Lady Ashton had recourse to an expedient very consistent with the temper and credulity of those times, but which the reader will probably pronounce truly detestable and diabolical.

CHAPTER XXXI

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In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weeds,
And wilful want, all careless of her needs;
So choosing solitary to abide,
Far from all neighbours, that her devilish deeds
And hellish arts from people she might hide,
And hurt far off, unknown, whome'er she envied.

Faërie Queene.

THE health of Lucy Ashton soon required the assistance of a person more skilful in the office of a sick-nurse than the female domestics of the family. Ailsie Gourlay, sometimes called the Wise Woman of Bowden, was the person whom, for her own strong reasons, Lady Ashton selected as an attendant upon her daughter.

This woman had acquired a considerable reputation among the ignorant by the pretended cures which she performed, especially in 'oncomes,' as the Scotch call them, or mysterious diseases, which baffle the regular physician. Her pharmacopœia consisted partly of herbs selected in planetary hours, partly of words, signs, and charms, which sometimes, perhaps, produced a favourable influence upon the imagination of her patients. Such was the avowed profession of Luckie Gourlay, which, as may well be supposed, was looked upon with a suspicious eye, not only by her neighbours, but even by the clergy of the district. In private, however, she traded more deeply in the occult sciences; for, notwithstanding the dreadful punishments inflicted upon the supposed crime of witchcraft, there wanted not those who, steeled by want and bitterness of spirit, were willing to adopt the hateful and dangerous character, for the sake of the influence which its terrors enabled them to exercise in the vicinity, and the wretched emolument which they could extract by the practice of their supposed art.

Ailsie Gourlay was not indeed fool enough to acknowledge a compact with the Evil One, which would have been a swift and

ready road to the stake and tar-barrel. Her fairy, she said, like Caliban's was a harmless fairy. Nevertheless, she 'spaed fortunes,' read dreams, composed philtres, discovered stolen goods, and made and dissolved matches as successfully as if, according to the belief of the whole neighbourhood, she had been aided in those arts by Beelzebub himself. The worst of the pretenders to these sciences was, that they were generally persons who, feeling themselves odious to humanity, were careless of what they did to deserve the public hatred. Real crimes were often committed under pretence of magical imposture; and it somewhat relieves the disgust with which we read, in the criminal records, the conviction of these wretches, to be aware that many of them merited, as poisoners, suborners, and diabolical agents in secret domestic crimes, the severe fate to which they were condemned for the imaginary guilt of witchcraft.

Such was Ailsie Gourlay, whom, in order to attain the absolute subjugation of Lucy Ashton's mind, her mother thought it fitting to place near her person. A woman of less consequence than Lady Ashton had not dared to take such a step; but her high rank and strength of character set her above the censure of the world, and she was allowed to have selected for her daughter's attendant the best and most experienced sick-nurse and 'mediciner' in the neighbourhood, where an inferior person would have fallen under the reproach of calling in the assistance of a partner and ally of the great Enemy of mankind.

The beldam caught her cue readily and by innuendo, without giving Lady Ashton the pain of distinct explanation. She was in many respects qualified for the part she played, which indeed could not be efficiently assumed without some knowledge of the human heart and passions. Dame Gourlay perceived that Lucy shuddered at her external appearance, which we have already described when we found her in the death-chamber of blind Alice; and while internally she hated the poor girl for the involuntary horror with which she saw she was regarded, she commenced her operations by endeavouring to efface or overcome those prejudices which, in her heart, she resented as mortal offences. This was easily done, for the hag's external ugliness was soon balanced by a show of kindness and interest, to which Lucy had of late been little accustomed; her attentive services and real skill gained her the ear, if not the confidence, of her patient; and under pretence of diverting

the solitude of a sick-room, she soon led her attention captive by the legends in which she was well skilled, and to which Lucy's habits of reading and reflection induced her to 'lend an attentive ear.' Dame Gourlay's tales were at first of a mild and interesting character —

> Of fays that nightly dance upon the wold,
> And lovers doom'd to wander and to weep,
> And castles high, where wicked wizards keep
> Their captive thralls.

Gradually, however, they assumed a darker and more mysterious character, and became such as, told by the midnight lamp, and enforced by the tremulous tone, the quivering and livid lip, the uplifted skinny forefinger, and the shaking head of the blue-eyed hag, might have appalled a less credulous imagination in an age more hard of belief. The old Sycorax saw her advantage, and gradually narrowed her magic circle around the devoted victim on whose spirit she practised. Her legends began to relate to the fortunes of the Ravenswood family, whose ancient grandeur and portentous authority credulity had graced with so many superstitious attributes. The story of the fatal fountain was narrated at full length, and with formidable additions, by the ancient sibyl. The prophecy, quoted by Caleb, concerning the dead bride who was to be won by the last of the Ravenswoods, had its own mysterious commentary; and the singular circumstance of the apparition seen by the Master of Ravenswood in the forest, having partly transpired through his hasty inquiries in the cottage of Old Alice, formed a theme for many exaggerations.

Lucy might have despised these tales if they had been related concerning another family, or if her own situation had been less despondent. But circumstanced as she was, the idea that an evil fate hung over her attachment became predominant over her other feelings; and the gloom of superstition darkened a mind already sufficiently weakened by sorrow, distress, uncertainty, and an oppressive sense of desertion and desolation. Stories were told by her attendant so closely resembling her own in their circumstances, that she was gradually led to converse upon such tragic and mystical subjects with the beldam, and to repose a sort of confidence in the sibyl, whom she still regarded with involuntary shuddering. Dame Gourlay knew how to avail herself of this imperfect confidence. She directed Lucy's thoughts to the means of

inquiring into futurity — the surest mode, perhaps, of shaking the understanding and destroying the spirits. Omens were expounded, dreams were interpreted, and other tricks of jugglery perhaps resorted to, by which the pretended adepts of the period deceived and fascinated their deluded followers. I find it mentioned in the articles of dittay against Ailsie Gourlay — for it is some comfort to know that the old hag was tried, condemned, and burned on the top of North Berwick Law, by sentence of a commission from the privy council — I find, I say, it was charged against her, among other offences, that she had, by the aid and delusions of Satan, shown to a young person of quality in a mirror glass, a gentleman then abroad, to whom the said young person was betrothed, and who appeared in the vision to be in the act of bestowing his hand upon another lady. But this and some other parts of the record appear to have been studiously left imperfect in names and dates, probably out of regard to the honour of the families concerned. If Dame Gourlay was able actually to play off such a piece of jugglery, it is clear she must have had better assistance to practise the deception than her own skill or funds could supply. Meanwhile, this mysterious visionary traffic had its usual effect in unsettling Miss Ashton's mind. Her temper became unequal, her health decayed daily, her manners grew moping, melancholy, and uncertain. Her father, guessing partly at the cause of these appearances, and exerting a degree of authority unusual with him, made a point of banishing Dame Gourlay from the castle; but the arrow was shot, and was rankling barb-deep in the side of the wounded deer.

It was shortly after the departure of this woman, that Lucy Ashton, urged by her parents, announced to them, with a vivacity by which they were startled, 'That she was conscious heaven and earth and hell had set themselves against her union with Ravenswood; still her contract,' she said, 'was a binding contract, and she neither would nor could resign it without the consent of Ravenswood. Let me be assured,' she concluded, 'that he will free me from my engagement, and dispose of me as you please, I care not how. When the diamonds are gone, what signifies the casket?'

The tone of obstinacy with which this was said, her eyes flashing with unnatural light, and her hands firmly clenched, precluded the possibility of dispute; and the utmost length which Lady Ashton's art could attain, only got her the privilege

of dictating the letter, by which her daughter required to know of Ravenswood whether he intended to abide by or to surrender what she termed 'their unfortunate engagement.' Of this advantage Lady Ashton so far and so ingeniously availed herself that, according to the wording of the letter, the reader would have supposed Lucy was calling upon her lover to renounce a contract which was contrary to the interests and inclinations of both. Not trusting even to this point of deception, Lady Ashton finally determined to suppress the letter altogether, in hopes that Lucy's impatience would induce her to condemn Ravenswood unheard and in absence. In this she was disappointed. The time, indeed, had long elapsed when an answer should have been received from the continent. The faint ray of hope which still glimmered in Lucy's mind was wellnigh extinguished. But the idea never forsook her that her letter might not have been duly forwarded. One of her mother's new machinations unexpectedly furnished her with the means of ascertaining what she most desired to know.

The female agent of hell having been dismissed from the castle, Lady Ashton, who wrought by all variety of means, resolved to employ, for working the same end on Lucy's mind, an agent of a very different character. This was no other than the Reverend Mr. Bide-the-Bent, a Presbyterian clergyman, formerly mentioned, of the very strictest order and the most rigid orthodoxy, whose aid she called in, upon the principle of the tyrant in the tragedy :

> I'll have a priest shall pr[illegible] from her faith,
> And make it sin not to [illegible]
> Which I'd have broken.

But Lady Ashton was mistaken in the agent she had selected. His prejudices, indeed, were easily enlisted on her side, and it was no difficult matter to make him regard with horror the prospect of a union betwixt the daughter of a God fearing, professing, and Presbyterian family of distinction with the heir of a blood-thirsty prelatist and persecutor, the hands of whose fathers had been dyed to the wrists in the blood of God's saints. This resembled, in the divine's opinion, the union of a Moabitish stranger with a daughter of Zion. But with all the more severe prejudices and principles of his sect, Bide-the-Bent possessed a sound judgment, and had learnt sympathy even in that very school of persecution where the

heart is so frequently hardened. In a private interview with Miss Ashton, he was deeply moved by her distress, and could not but admit the justice of her request to be permitted a direct communication with Ravenswood upon the subject of their solemn contract. When she urged to him the great uncertainty under which she laboured whether her letter had been ever forwarded, the old man paced the room with long steps, shook his grey head, rested repeatedly for a space on his ivory-headed staff, and, after much hesitation, confessed that he thought her doubts so reasonable that he would himself aid in the removal of them.

'I cannot but opine, Miss Lucy,' he said, 'that your worshipful lady mother hath in this matter an eagerness whilk, although it ariseth doubtless from love to your best interests here and hereafter, for the man is of persecuting blood, and himself a persecutor, a Cavalier or Malignant, and a scoffer, who hath no inheritance in Jesse; nevertheless, we are commanded to do justice unto all, and to fulfil our bond and covenant, as well to the stranger as to him who is in brotherhood with us. Wherefore myself, even I myself, will be aiding unto the delivery of your letter to the man Edgar Ravenswood, trusting that the issue thereof may be your deliverance from the nets in which he hath sinfully engaged you. And that I may do in this neither more nor less than hath been warranted by your honourable parents, I pray you to transcribe, without increment or subtraction, the letter formerly expeded under the dictation of your right honourable mother; and I shall put it into such sure course of being delivered, that if, honoured young madam, you shall receive no answer, it will be necessary that you conclude that the man meaneth in silence to abandon that naughty contract, which, peradventure, he may be unwilling directly to restore.'

Lucy eagerly embraced the expedient of the worthy divine. A new letter was written in the precise terms of the former, and consigned by Mr. Bide-the-Bent to the charge of Saunders Moonshine, a zealous elder of the church when on shore, and when on board his brig as bold a smuggler as ever ran out a sliding bowsprit to the winds that blow betwixt Campvere and the east coast of Scotland. At the recommendation of his pastor, Saunders readily undertook that the letter should be securely conveyed to the Master of Ravenswood at the court where he now resided.

This retrospect became necessary to explain the conference

betwixt Miss Ashton, her mother, and Bucklaw which we have detailed in a preceding chapter.

Lucy was now like the sailor who, while drifting through a tempestuous ocean, clings for safety to a single plank, his powers of grasping it becoming every moment more feeble, and the deep darkness of the night only checkered by the flashes of lightning hissing as they show the white tops of the billows, in which he is soon to be engulfed.

Week crept away after week, and day after day. St. Jude's day arrived, the last and protracted term to which Lucy had limited herself, and there was neither letter nor news of Ravenswood.

CHAPTER XXXII

How fair these names, how much unlike they look
To all the blurr'd subscriptions in my book!
The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
Tapering, yet straight, like pine-trees in his grove;
While free and fine the bride's appear below,
As light and slender as her jessamines grow.

CRABBE.

ST. JUDE'S day came, the term assigned by Lucy herself as the furthest date of expectation, and, as we have already said, there were neither letters from nor news of Ravenswood. But there were news of Bucklaw, and of his trusty associate Craigengelt, who arrived early in the morning for the completion of the proposed espousals, and for signing the necessary deeds.

These had been carefully prepared under the revisal of Sir William Ashton himself, it having been resolved, on account of the state of Miss Ashton's health, as it was said, that none save the parties immediately interested should be present when the parchments were subscribed. It was further determined that the marriage should be solemnised upon the fourth day after signing the articles, a measure adopted by Lady Ashton, in order that Lucy might have as little time as possible to recede or relapse into intractability. There was no appearance, however, of her doing either. She heard the proposed arrangement with the calm indifference of despair, or rather with an apathy arising from the oppressed and stupified state of her feelings. To an observer so unobserving as that of Bucklaw, her demeanour had little more of reluctance than might suit the character of a bashful young lady, who, however, he could not disguise from himself, was complying with the choice of her friends rather than exercising any personal predilection in his favour.

When the morning compliments of the bridegroom had been paid, Miss Ashton was left for some time to herself; her mother

remarking, that the deeds must be signed before the hour of noon, in order that the marriage might be happy.

Lucy suffered herself to be attired for the occasion as the taste of her attendants suggested, and was of course splendidly arrayed. Her dress was composed of white satin and Brussels lace, and her hair arranged with a profusion of jewels, whose lustre made a strange contrast to the deadly paleness of her complexion, and to the trouble which dwelt in her unsettled eye.

Her toilette was hardly finished ere Henry appeared, to conduct the passive bride to the state apartment, where all was prepared for signing the contract. 'Do you know, sister,' he said, 'I am glad you are to have Bucklaw after all, instead of Ravenswood, who looked like a Spanish grandee come to cut our throats and trample our bodies under foot. And I am glad the broad seas are between us this day, for I shall never forget how frightened I was when I took him for the picture of old Sir Malise walked out of the canvas. Tell me true, are you not glad to be fairly shot of him?'

'Ask me no questions, dear Henry,' said his unfortunate sister; 'there is little more can happen to make me either glad or sorry in this world.'

'And that 's what all young brides say,' said Henry; 'and so do not be cast down, Lucy, for you 'll tell another tale a twelvemonth hence; and I am to be bride's-man, and ride before you to the kirk; and all our kith, kin, and allies, and all Bucklaw's, are to be mounted and in order; and I am to have a scarlet laced coat, and a feathered hat, and a sword-belt, double bordered with gold, and *point d'Espagne*, and a dagger instead of a sword; and I should like a sword much better, but my father won't hear of it. All my things, and a hundred besides, are to come out from Edinburgh to night with old Gilbert and the sumpter mules; and I will bring them and show them to you the instant they come.'

The boy's chatter was here interrupted by the arrival of Lady Ashton, somewhat alarmed at her daughter's stay. With one of her sweetest smiles, she took Lucy's arm under her own, and led her to the apartment where her presence was expected.

There were only present, Sir William Ashton and Colonel Douglas Ashton, the last in full regimentals; Bucklaw, in bridegroom trim; Craigengelt, freshly equipt from top to toe by the bounty of his patron, and bedizened with as much lace as might have become the dress of the Copper Captain; together

with the Rev. Mr. Bide-the-Bent; the presence of a minister being, in strict Presbyterian families, an indispensable requisite upon all occasions of unusual solemnity.

Wines and refreshments were placed on a table, on which the writings were displayed, ready for signature.

But before proceeding either to business or refreshment, Mr. Bide-the-Bent, at a signal from Sir William Ashton, invited the company to join him in a short extemporary prayer, in which he implored a blessing upon the contract now to be solemnised between the honourable parties then present. With the simplicity of his times and profession, which permitted strong personal allusions, he petitioned that the wounded mind of one of these noble parties might be healed, in reward of her compliance with the advice of her right honourable parents; and that, as she had proved herself a child after God's commandment, by honouring her father and mother, she and hers might enjoy the promised blessing — length of days in the land here, and a happy portion hereafter in a better country. He prayed farther, that the bridegroom might be weaned from those lusts which seduce youth from the path of knowledge; that he might cease to take delight in vain and unprofitable company, scotter-rioters, and those who sit late at the wine (here Bucklaw winked to Craigengelt), and cease from the society that causeth to err. A suitable supplication in behalf of Sir William and Lady Ashton and their family concluded this religious address, which the embraced every individual present excepting Craigengelt, whom the worthy divine probably considered as past all hopes of grace.

The business of the day now went forward: Sir William Ashton signed the contract with legal solemnity and precision; his son, with military nonchalance; and Bucklaw, having subscribed as rapidly as Craigengelt could manage to turn the leaves, concluded by wiping his pen on that worthy's new laced cravat.

It was now Miss Ashton's turn to sign the writings, and she was guided by her watchful mother to the table for that purpose. At her first attempt, she began to write with a dry pen, and when the circumstance was pointed out, seemed unable, after several attempts, to dip it in the massive silver ink-standish, which stood full before her. Lady Ashton's vigilance hastened to supply the deficiency. I have myself seen the fatal deed, and in the distinct characters in which the name of Lucy Ashton is traced on each page there is only a very slight tremulous irregularity, indicative of her state of mind at the time of the

subscription. But the last signature is incomplete, defaced, and blotted; for, while her hand was employed in tracing it, the hasty tramp of a horse was heard at the gate, succeeded by a step in the outer gallery, and a voice which, in a commanding tone, bore down the opposition of the menials. The pen dropped from Lucy's fingers, as she exclaimed with a faint shriek—'He is come—he is come!'

CHAPTER XXXIII

This by his tongue should be a Montague!
Fetch me my rapier, boy;
Now, by the faith and honour of my kin,
To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

Romeo and Juliet.

HARDLY had Miss Ashton dropped the pen, when the door of the apartment flew open, and the Master of Ravenswood entered the apartment.

Lockhard and another domestic, who had in vain attempted to oppose his passage through the gallery or antechamber, were seen standing on the threshold transfixed with surprise, which was instantly communicated to the whole party in the state room. That of Colonel Douglas Ashton was mingled with resentment; that of Bucklaw with haughty and affected indifference; the rest, even Lady Ashton herself, showed signs of fear; and Lucy seemed stiffened to stone by this unexpected apparition. Apparition it might well be termed, for Ravenswood had more the appearance of one returned from the dead than of a living visitor.

He planted himself full in the middle of the apartment, opposite to the table at which Lucy was seated, on whom, as if she had been alone in the chamber, he bent his eyes with a mingled expression of deep grief and deliberate indignation. His dark-coloured riding cloak, displaced from one shoulder, hung around one side of his person in the ample folds of the Spanish mantle. The rest of his rich dress was travel-soiled, and deranged by hard riding. He had a sword by his side, and pistols in his belt. His slouched hat, which he had not removed at entrance, gave an additional gloom to his dark features, which, wasted by sorrow and marked by the ghastly look communicated by long illness, added to a countenance naturally somewhat stern and wild a fierce and even savage expression. The matted and dishevelled locks of hair which escaped from

under his hat, together with his fixed and unmoved posture, made his head more resemble that of a marble bust than that of a living man. He said not a single word, and there was a deep silence in the company for more than two minutes.

It was broken by Lady Ashton, who in that space partly recovered her natural audacity. She demanded to know the cause of this unauthorised intrusion.

'That is a question, madam,' said her son, 'which I have the best right to ask; and I must request of the Master of Ravenswood to follow me where he can answer it at leisure.'

Bucklaw interposed, saying, 'No man on earth should usurp his previous right in demanding an explanation from the Master. Craigengelt,' he added, in an undertone, 'd—n ye, why do you stand staring as if you saw a ghost? fetch me my sword from the gallery.'

'I will relinquish to none,' said Colonel Ashton, 'my right of calling to account the man who has offered this unparalleled affront to my family.'

'Be patient, gentlemen,' said Ravenswood, turning sternly towards them, and waving his hand as if to impose silence on their altercation. 'If you are as weary of your lives as I am, I will find time and place to pledge mine against one or both; at present, I have no leisure for the disputes of triflers.'

'Triflers!' echoed Colonel Ashton, half unsheathing his sword, while Bucklaw laid his hand on the hilt of that which Craigengelt had just reached him.

Sir William Ashton, alarmed for his son's safety, rushed between the young men and Ravenswood, exclaiming, 'My son, I command you — Bucklaw, I entreat you — keep the peace, in the name of the Queen and of the law!'

'In the name of the law of God,' said Bide-the-Bent, advancing also with uplifted hands between Bucklaw, the Colonel, and the object of their resentment — 'in the name of Him who brought peace on earth and good-will to mankind, I implore — I beseech — I command you to forbear violence towards each other! God hateth the bloodthirsty man; he who striketh with the sword shall perish with the sword.'

'Do you take me for a dog, sir,' said Colonel Ashton, turning fiercely upon him, 'or something more brutally stupid, to endure this insult in my father's house? Let me go, Bucklaw! He shall account to me, or, by Heaven, I will stab him where he stands!'

'You shall not touch him here,' said Bucklaw; 'he once

gave me my life, and were he the devil come to fly away with the whole house and generation, he shall have nothing but fair play.'

The passions of the two young men thus counteracting each other gave Ravenswood leisure to exclaim, in a stern and steady voice, 'Silence! — let him who really seeks danger take the fitting time when it is to be found; my mission here will be shortly accomplished. Is *that* your handwriting, madam?' he added in a softer tone, extending towards Miss Ashton her last letter.

A faltering 'Yes' seemed rather to escape from her lips than to be uttered as a voluntary answer.

'And is *this* also your handwriting?' extending towards her the mutual engagement.

Lucy remained silent. Terror, and a yet stronger and more confused feeling, so utterly disturbed her understanding that she probably scarcely comprehended the question that was put to her.

'If you design,' said Sir William Ashton, 'to found any legal claim on that paper, sir, do not expect to receive any answer to an extrajudicial question.'

'Sir William Ashton,' said Ravenswood, 'I pray you, and all who hear me, that you will not mistake my purpose. If this young lady, of her own free will, desires the restoration of this contract, as her letter would seem to imply, there is not a withered leaf which this autumn wind strews on the heath that is more valueless in my eyes. But I must and will hear the truth from her own mouth; without this satisfaction I will not leave this spot. Murder me by numbers you possibly may; but I am an armed man — I am a desperate man, and I will not die without ample vengeance. This is my resolution, take it as you may. I WILL hear her determination from her own mouth; from her own mouth, alone, and without witnesses, will I hear it. Now, choose,' he said, drawing his sword with the right hand, and, with the left, by the same motion taking a pistol from his belt and cocking it, but turning the point of one weapon and the muzzle of the other to the ground — 'choose if you will have this hall floated with blood, or if you will grant me the decisive interview with my affianced bride which the laws of God and the country alike entitle me to demand.'

All recoiled at the sound of his voice and the determined action by which it was accompanied: for the ecstasy of real desperation seldom fails to overpower the less energetic passions

by which it may be opposed. The clergyman was the first to speak. 'In the name of God,' he said, 'receive an overture of peace from the meanest of His servants. What this honourable person demands, albeit it is urged with over violence, hath yet in it something of reason. Let him hear from Miss Lucy's own lips that she hath dutifully acceded to the will of her parents, and repenteth her of her covenant with him; and when he is assured of this he will depart in peace unto his own dwelling, and cumber us no more. Alas! the workings of the ancient Adam are strong even in the regenerate; surely we should have long-suffering with those who, being yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, are swept forward by the uncontrollable current of worldly passion. Let, then, the Master of Ravenswood have the interview on which he insisteth; it can but be as a passing pang to this honourable maiden, since her faith is now irrevocably pledged to the choice of her parents. Let it, I say, be thus: it belongeth to my functions to entreat your honours' compliance with this healing overture.'

'Never!' answered Lady Ashton, whose rage had now overcome her first surprise and terror — 'never shall this man speak in private with my daughter, the affianced bride of another! Pass from this room who will, I remain here. I fear neither his violence nor his weapons, though some,' she said, glancing a look towards Colonel Ashton, 'who bear my name appear more moved by them.'

'For God's sake, madam,' answered the worthy divine, 'add not fuel to firebrands. The Master of Ravenswood cannot, I am sure, object to your presence, the young lady's state of health being considered, and your maternal duty. I myself will also tarry; peradventure my grey hairs may turn away wrath.'

'You are welcome to do so, sir,' said Ravenswood; 'and Lady Ashton is also welcome to remain, if she shall think proper; but let all others depart.'

'Ravenswood,' said Colonel Ashton, crossing him as he went out, 'you shall account for this ere long.'

'When you please,' replied Ravenswood.

'But I,' said Bucklaw, with a half smile, 'have a prior demand on your leisure, a claim of some standing.'

'Arrange it as you will,' said Ravenswood; 'leave me but this day in peace, and I will have no dearer employment on earth to-morrow than to give you all the satisfaction you can desire.'

The other gentlemen left the apartment; but Sir William Ashton lingered.

'Master of Ravenswood,' he said, in a conciliating tone, 'I think I have not deserved that you should make this scandal and outrage in my family. If you will sheathe your sword, and retire with me into my study, I will prove to you, by the most satisfactory arguments, the inutility of your present irregular procedure ——'

'To-morrow, sir — to-morrow — to-morrow, I will hear you at length,' reiterated Ravenswood, interrupting him; 'this day hath its own sacred and indispensable business.'

He pointed to the door, and Sir William left the apartment.

Ravenswood sheathed his sword, uncocked and returned his pistol to his belt; walked deliberately to the door of the apartment, which he bolted; returned, raised his hat from his forehead, and, gazing upon Lucy with eyes in which an expression of sorrow overcame their late fierceness, spread his dishevelled locks back from his face, and said, 'Do you know me, Miss Ashton? I am still Edgar Ravenswood.' She was silent, and he went on with increasing vehemence — 'I am still that Edgar Ravenswood who, for your affection, renounced the dear ties by which injured honour bound him to seek vengeance. I am that Ravenswood who, for your sake, forgave, nay, clasped hands in friendship with, the oppressor and pillager of his house, the traducer and murderer of his father.'

'My daughter,' answered Lady Ashton, interrupting him, 'has no occasion to dispute the identity of your person: the venom of your present language is sufficient to remind her that she speaks with the mortal enemy of her father.'

'I pray you to be patient, madam,' answered Ravenswood 'my answer must come from her own lips. Once more, Miss Lucy Ashton, I am that Ravenswood to whom you granted the solemn engagement which you now desire to retract and cancel.'

Lucy's bloodless lips could only falter out the words, 'It was my mother.'

'She speaks truly,' said Lady Ashton, 'it *was* I who, authorised alike by the laws of God and man, advised her, and concurred with her, to set aside an unhappy and precipitate engagement, and to annul it by the authority of Scripture itself.'

'Scripture!' said Ravenswood, scornfully.

'Let him hear the text,' said Lady Ashton, appealing to the divine, 'on which you yourself, with cautious reluctance,

declared the nullity of the pretended engagement insisted upon by this violent man.'

The clergyman took his clasped Bible from his pocket, and read the following words: 'If a woman vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth, and her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every vow wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.'

'And was it not even so with us?' interrupted Ravenswood.

'Control thy impatience, young man,' answered the divine, 'and hear what follows in the sacred text: — "But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth, not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand; and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."'

'And was not,' said Lady Ashton, fiercely and triumphantly breaking in — 'was not ours the case stated in the Holy Writ? Will this person deny, that the instant her parents heard of the vow, or bond, by which our daughter had bound her soul, we disallowed the same in the most express terms, and informed him by writing of our determination?'

'And is this all?' said Ravenswood, looking at Lucy. 'Are you willing to barter sworn faith, the exercise of free will, and the feelings of mutual affection to this wretched hypocritical sophistry?'

'Hear him!' said Lady Ashton, looking to the clergyman — 'hear the blasphemer!'

'May God forgive him,' said Bide-the-Bent, 'and enlighten his ignorance!'

'Hear what I have sacrificed for you,' said Ravenswood, still addressing Lucy, 'ere you sanction what has been done in your name. The honour of an ancient family, the urgent advice of my best friends, have been in vain used to sway my resolution; neither the arguments of reason nor the portents of superstition have shaken my fidelity. The very dead have arisen to warn me, and their warning has been despised. Are you prepared to pierce my heart for its fidelity with the very weapon which my rash confidence entrusted to your grasp?'

'Master of Ravenswood,' said Lady Ashton, 'you have asked what questions you thought fit. You see the total incapacity of my daughter to answer you. But I will reply for her, and in a manner which you cannot dispute. You desire to know

whether Lucy Ashton, of her own free will, desires to annul the engagement into which she has been trepanned. You have her letter under her own hand, demanding the surrender of it; and, in yet more full evidence of her purpose, here is the contract which she has this morning subscribed, in presence of this reverend gentleman, with Mr. Hayston of Bucklaw.'

Ravenswood gazed upon the deed as if petrified. 'And it was without fraud or compulsion,' said he, looking towards the clergyman, 'that Miss Ashton subscribed this parchment?'

'I vouch it upon my sacred character.'

'This is indeed, madam, an undeniable piece of evidence,' said Ravenswood, sternly; 'and it will be equally unnecessary and dishonourable to waste another word in useless remonstrance or reproach. There, madam,' he said, laying down before Lucy the signed paper and the broken piece of gold — 'there are the evidences of your first engagement; may you be more faithful to that which you have just formed. I will trouble you to return the corresponding tokens of my ill-placed confidence; I ought rather to say, of my egregious folly.'

Lucy returned the scornful glance of her lover with a gaze from which perception seemed to have been banished; yet she seemed partly to have understood his meaning, for she raised her hands as if to undo a blue ribbon which she wore around her neck. She was unable to accomplish her purpose, but Lady Ashton cut the ribbon asunder, and detached the broken piece of gold, which Miss Ashton had till then worn concealed in her bosom; the written counterpart of the lovers' engagement she for some time had had in her own possession. With a haughty courtesy, she delivered both to Ravenswood, who was much softened when he took the piece of gold.

'And she could wear it thus,' he said, speaking to himself — 'could wear it in her very bosom — could wear it next to her heart — even when —— But complaint avails not,' he said, dashing from his eye the tear which had gathered in it, and resuming the stern composure of his manner. He strode to the chimney, and threw into the fire the paper and piece of gold, stamping upon the coals with the heel of his boot, as if to ensure their destruction. 'I will be no longer,' he then said, 'an intruder here. Your evil wishes, and your worse offices, Lady Ashton, I will only return by hoping these will be your last machinations against your daughter's honour and happiness. And to you, madam,' he said, addressing Lucy, 'I have nothing farther to say, except to pray to God that you may not become a world's

wonder for this act of wilful and deliberate perjury.' Having uttered those words, he turned on his heel and left the apartment.

Sir William Ashton, by entreaty and authority, had detained his son and Bucklaw in a distant part of the castle, in order to prevent their again meeting with Ravenswood; but as the Master descended the great staircase, Lockhard delivered him a billet signed 'Sholto Douglas Ashton,' requesting to know where the Master of Ravenswood would be heard of four or five days from hence, as the writer had business of weight to settle with him, so soon as an important family event had taken place.

'Tell Colonel Ashton,' said Ravenswood, composedly, 'I shall be found at Wolf's Crag when his leisure serves him.'

As he descended the outward stair which led from the terrace, he was interrupted a second time by Craigengelt, who, on the part of his principal, the Laird of Bucklaw, expressed a hope that Ravenswood would not leave Scotland within ten days at least, as he had both former and recent civilities for which to express his gratitude.

'Tell your master,' said Ravenswood, fiercely, 'to choose his own time. He will find me at Wolf's Crag, if his purpose is not forestalled.'

'*My* master!' replied Craigengelt, encouraged by seeing Colonel Ashton and Bucklaw at the bottom of the terrace. 'Give me leave to say I know of no such person upon earth, nor will I permit such language to be used to me!'

'Seek your master, then, in hell!' exclaimed Ravenswood, giving way to the passion he had hitherto restrained, and throwing Craigengelt from him with such violence that he rolled down the steps and lay senseless at the foot of them. 'I am a fool,' he instantly added, 'to vent my passion upon a caitiff so worthless.'

He then mounted his horse, which at his arrival he had secured to a balustrade in front of the castle, rode very slowly past Bucklaw and Colonel Ashton, raising his hat as he passed each, and looking in their faces steadily while he offered this mute salutation, which was returned by both with the same stern gravity. Ravenswood walked on with equal deliberation until he reached the head of the avenue, as if to show that he rather courted than avoided interruption. When he had passed the upper gate, he turned his horse, and looked at the castle with a fixed eye; then set spurs to his good steed, and departed with the speed of a demon dismissed by the exorcist.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Who comes from the bridal chamber?
It is Azrael, the angel of death.

Thalaba.

AFTER the dreadful scene that had taken place at the castle, Lucy was transported to her own chamber, where she remained for some time in a state of absolute stupor. Yet afterwards, in the course of the ensuing day, she seemed to have recovered, not merely her spirits and resolution, but a sort of flighty levity, that was foreign to her character and situation, and which was at times chequered by fits of deep silence and melancholy, and of capricious pettishness. Lady Ashton became much alarmed, and consulted the family physicians. But as her pulse indicated no change, they could only say that the disease was on the spirits, and recommended gentle exercise and amusement. Miss Ashton never alluded to what had passed in the state-room. It seemed doubtful even if she was conscious of it, for she was often observed to raise her hands to her neck, as if in search of the ribbon that had been taken from it, and mutter, in surprise and discontent, when she could not find it, 'It was the link that bound me to life.'

Notwithstanding all these remarkable symptoms, Lady Ashton was too deeply pledged to delay her daughter's marriage even in her present state of health. It cost her much trouble to keep up the fair side of appearances towards Bucklaw. She was well aware, that if he once saw any reluctance on her daughter's part, he would break off the treaty, to her great personal shame and dishonour. She therefore resolved that, if Lucy continued passive, the marriage should take place upon the day that had been previously fixed, trusting that a change of place, of situation, and of character would operate a more speedy and effectual cure upon the unsettled spirits of her daughter than could be attained by the slow measures which

the medical men recommended. Sir William Ashton's views of family aggrandisement, and his desire to strengthen himself against the measures of the Marquis of A——, readily induced him to acquiesce in what he could not have perhaps resisted if willing to do so. As for the young men, Bucklaw and Colonel Ashton, they protested that, after what had happened, it would be most dishonourable to postpone for a single hour the time appointed for the marriage, as it would be generally ascribed to their being intimidated by the intrusive visit and threats of Ravenswood.

Bucklaw would indeed have been incapable of such precipitation, had he been aware of the state of Miss Ashton's health, or rather of her mind. But custom, upon these occasions, permitted only brief and sparing intercourse between the bridegroom and the betrothed; a circumstance so well improved by Lady Ashton, that Bucklaw neither saw nor suspected the real state of the health and feelings of his unhappy bride.

On the eve of the bridal day Lucy appeared to have one of her fits of levity, and surveyed with a degree of girlish interest the various preparations of dress, etc. etc., which the different members of the family had prepared for the occasion.

The morning dawned bright and cheerily. The bridal guests assembled in gallant troops from distant quarters. Not only the relations of Sir William Ashton, and the still more dignified connexions of his lady, together with the numerous kinsmen and allies of the bridegroom, were present upon this joyful ceremony, gallantly mounted, arrayed, and caparisoned, but almost every Presbyterian family of distinction within fifty miles made a point of attendance upon an occasion which was considered as giving a sort of triumph over the Marquis of A——, in the person of his kinsman. Splendid refreshments awaited the guests on their arrival, and after these were finished, the cry was 'To horse.' The bride was led forth betwixt her brother Henry and her mother. Her gaiety of the preceding day had given rise to a deep shade of melancholy, which, however, did not misbecome an occasion so momentous. There was a light in her eyes and a colour in her cheek which had not been kindled for many a day, and which, joined to her great beauty, and the splendour of her dress, occasioned her entrance to be greeted with a universal murmur of applause, in which even the ladies could not refrain from joining. While the cavalcade were getting to horse, Sir William Ashton, a man of peace and of form, censured his son Henry for having

begirt himself with a military sword of preposterous length, belonging to his brother, Colonel Ashton.

'If you must have a weapon,' he said, 'upon such a peaceful occasion, why did you not use the short poniard sent from Edinburgh on purpose?'

The boy vindicated himself by saying it was lost.

'You put it out of the way yourself, I suppose,' said his father, 'out of ambition to wear that preposterous thing, which might have served Sir William Wallace. But never mind, get to horse now, and take care of your sister.'

The boy did so, and was placed in the centre of the gallant train. At the time, he was too full of his own appearance, his sword, his laced cloak, his feathered hat, and his managed horse, to pay much regard to anything else; but he afterwards remembered to the hour of his death, that when the hand of his sister, by which she supported herself on the pillion behind him, touched his own, it felt as wet and cold as sepulchral marble.

Glancing wide over hill and dale, the fair bridal procession at last reached the parish church, which they nearly filled; for, besides domestics, above a hundred gentlemen and ladies were present upon the occasion. The marriage ceremony was performed according to the rites of the Presbyterian persuasion, to which Bucklaw of late had judged it proper to conform.

On the outside of the church, a liberal dole was distributed to the poor of the neighbouring parishes, under the direction of Johnnie Mortsheugh, who had lately been promoted from his desolate quarters at the Hermitage to fill the more eligible situation of sexton at the parish church of Ravenswood. Dame Gourlay, with two of her contemporaries, the same who assisted at Alice's late-wake, seated apart upon a flat monument, or 'through-stane,' sate enviously comparing the shares which had been allotted to them in dividing the dole.

'Johnnie Mortsheugh,' said Annie Winnie, 'might hae minded auld lang syne, and thought of his auld kimmers, for as braw as he is with his new black coat. I hae gotten but five herring instead o' sax, and this disna look like a gude saxpennys, and I daresay this bit morsel o' beef is an unce lighter than ony that 's been dealt round; and it 's a bit o' the tenony hough, mair by token that yours, Maggie, is out o' the back-sey.'

'Mine, quo' she!' mumbled the paralytic hag — 'mine is half banes, I trow. If grit folk gie poor bodies ony thing for coming

to their weddings and burials, it suld be something that wad do them gude, I think.'

'Their gifts,' said Ailsie Gourlay, 'are dealt for nae love of us, nor out of respect for whether we feed or starve. They wad gie us whinstanes for loaves, if it would serve their ain vanity, and yet they expect us to be as gratefu', as they ca' it, as if they served us for true love and liking.'

'And that 's truly said,' answered her companion.

'But, Ailsie Gourlay, ye 're the auldest o' us three — did ye ever see a mair grand bridal?'

I winna say that I have,' answered the hag; 'but I think soon to see as braw a burial.'

'And that wad please me as weel,' said Annie Winnie; 'for there 's as large a dole, and folk are no obliged to girn and laugh, and mak murgeons, and wish joy to these hellicat quality, that lord it ower us like brute beasts. I like to pack the dead-dole in my lap, and rin ower my auld rhyme —

> My loaf in my lap, my penny in my purse,
> Thou art ne'er the better, and I 'm ne'er the worse.' [1]

'That 's right, Annie,' said the paralytic woman; 'God send us a green Yule and a fat kirkyard!'

'But I wad like to ken, Luckie Gourlay, for ye 're the auldest and wisest amang us, whilk o' these revellers' turn it will be to be streikit first?'

'D' ye see yon dandilly maiden,' said Dame Gourlay, 'a' glistenin' wi' gowd and jewels, that they are lifting up on the white horse behind that hare brained callant in scarlet, wi' the lang sword at his side?'

'But that 's the bride!' said her companion, her cold heart touched with some sort of compassion — 'that 's the very bride hersell! Eh, whow! sae young, sae braw, and sae bonny — and is her time sae short?'

'I tell ye,' said the sibyl, 'her winding sheet is up as high as her throat already, believe it wha list. Her sand has but few grains to rin out; and nae wonder — they 've been weel shaken. The leaves are withering fast on the trees, but she 'll never see the Martinmas wind gar them dance in swirls like the fairy rings.'

'Ye waited on her for a quarter,' said the paralytic woman, 'and got twa red pieces, or I am far beguiled?'

'Ay, ay,' answered Ailsie, with a bitter grin; 'and Sir

[1] See Curing by Charms. Note 11.

William Ashton promised me a bonny red gown to the feast ... that — a stake, and a chain, and a tar-barrel, lass! what thinks ye o' that for a propine? — for being up early and doun late for fourscore nights and mair wi' his dwining daughter. But he may keep it for his ain leddy, cummers.'

'I hae heard a sough,' said Annie Winnie, 'as if Leddy Ashton was nae canny body.'

'D'ye see her yonder,' said Dame Gourlay, 'as she prances on her grey gelding out at the kirkyard? There's mair o' the deevilry in that woman, as brave and fair fashioned as she is yonder, than in a' the Scotch witches that ever flew by moonlight ower North Berwick Law.'

'What's that ye say about witches, ye damned hags!' said Johnnie Mortsheugh; 'are ye casting yer cantrips in the very kirkyard, to mischieve the bride and bridegroom? Get away hame, for if I tak my souple t'ye, I'll gar ye find the road faster than ye wad like.'

'Hegh, sirs!' answered Ailsie Gourlay; 'how braw are we wi' our new black coat and our weel pouthered head, as if we had never kenn'd hunger nor thirst oursells! and we'll be screwing up our bit fiddle, doubtless, in the ha' the night, amang a' the other elbo'-jiggers for miles round. Let's see if the pins haud, Johnnie — that's a', lad.'

'I take ye a' to witness, gude people,' said Mortsheugh, 'that she threatens me wi' mischief, and forespeaks me. If ony thing but gude happens to me or my fiddle this night, I'll make it the blackest night's job she ever stirred in. I'll lime her before presbytery and synod: I'm half a minister mysell, now that I'm a bedral in an inhabited parish.'

Although the mutual hatred betwixt these hags and the rest of mankind had steeled their hearts against all impressions of festivity, this was by no means the case with the multitude at large. The splendour of the bridal retinue, the gay dresses, the spirited horses, the blithesome appearance of the handsome women and gallant gentlemen assembled upon the occasion, had the usual effect upon the minds of the populace. The repeated shouts of 'Ashton and Bucklaw for ever!' the discharge of pistols, guns, and musketoons, to give what was called the bridal shot, evinced the interest the people took in the occasion of the cavalcade, as they accompanied it upon their return to the castle. If there was here and there an elder peasant or his wife who sneered at the pomp of the upstart family, and remembered the days of the long-descended

Ravenswoods, even they, attracted by the plentiful cheer which the castle that day afforded to rich and poor, held their way thither, and acknowledged, notwithstanding their prejudices, the influence of *l'Amphitrion où l'on dine*.

Thus accompanied with the attendance both of rich and poor, Lucy returned to her father's house. Bucklaw used his privilege of riding next to the bride, but, new to such a situation, rather endeavoured to attract attention by the display of his person and horsemanship, than by any attempt to address her in private. They reached the castle in safety, amid a thousand joyous acclamations.

It is well known that the weddings of ancient days were celebrated with a festive publicity rejected by the delicacy of modern times. The marriage guests, on the present occasion, were regaled with a banquet of unbounded profusion, the relics of which, after the domestics had feasted in their turn, were distributed among the shouting crowd, with as many barrels of ale as made the hilarity without correspond to that within the castle. The gentlemen, according to the fashion of the times, indulged, for the most part, in deep draughts of the richest wines, while the ladies, prepared for the ball which always closed a bridal entertainment, impatiently expected their arrival in the state gallery. At length the social party broke up at a late hour, and the gentlemen crowded into the saloon, where, enlivened by wine and the joyful occasion, they laid aside their swords and handed their impatient partners to the floor. The music already rung from the gallery, along the fretted roof of the ancient state apartment. According to strict etiquette, the bride ought to have opened the ball: but Lady Ashton, making an apology on account of her daughter's health, offered her own hand to Bucklaw as substitute for her daughter's.

But as Lady Ashton raised her head gracefully, [illegible] the strain at which she was to begin the dance, she [illegible] much struck by an unexpected alteration in the [illegible] of the apartment that she was surprised into an ex[illegible]

'Who has dared to change the pictures?'

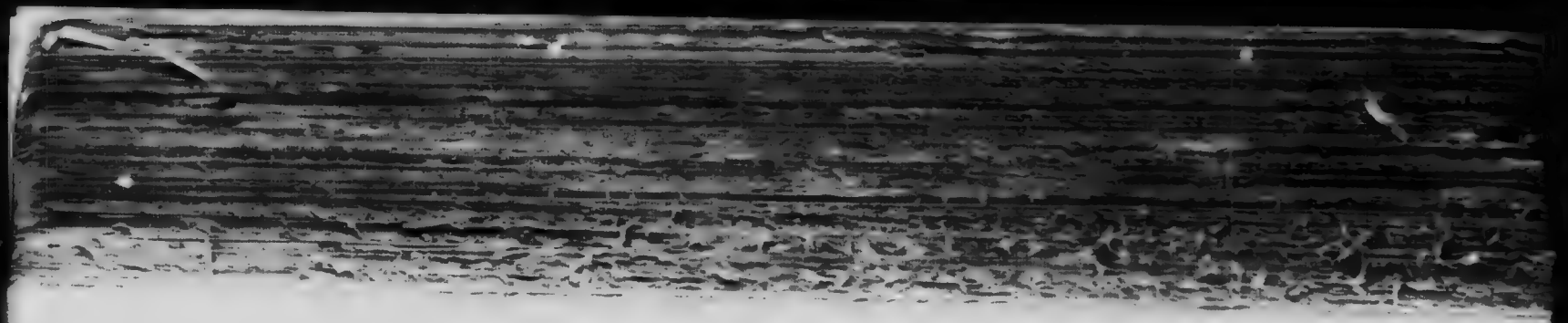
All looked up, and those who knew the usual state of the apartment observed, with surprise, that the picture of Sir William Ashton's father was removed from its place, and in its stead that of old Sir Malise Ravenswood seemed to frown wrath and vengeance upon the party assembled below. The exchange must have been made while the apartments were

empty, but had not been observed until the torches and lights in the sconces were kindled for the ball. The haughty and heated spirits of the gentlemen led them to demand an immediate inquiry into the cause of what they deemed an affront to their host and to themselves; but Lady Ashton, recovering herself, passed it over as the freak of a crazy wench who was maintained about the castle, and whose susceptible imagination had been observed to be much affected by the stories which Dame Gourlay delighted to tell concerning 'the former family,' so Lady Ashton named the Ravenswoods. The obnoxious picture was immediately removed, and the ball was opened by Lady Ashton, with a grace and dignity which supplied the charms of youth, and almost verified the extravagant encomiums of the elder part of the company, who extolled her performance as far exceeding the dancing of the rising generation.

When Lady Ashton sat down, she was not surprised to find that her daughter had left the apartment, and she herself followed, eager to obviate any impression which might have been made upon her nerves by an incident so likely to affect them as the mysterious transposition of the portraits. Apparently she found her apprehensions groundless, for she returned in about an hour, and whispered the bridegroom, who extricated himself from the dancers, and vanished from the apartment. The instruments now played their loudest strains; the dancers pursued their exercise with all the enthusiasm inspired by youth, mirth, and high spirits, when a cry was heard so shrill and piercing as at once to arrest the dance and the music. All stood motionless; but when the yell was again repeated, Colonel Ashton snatched a torch from the sconce, and demanding the key of the bridal-chamber from Henry, to whom, as bride's-man, it had been entrusted, rushed thither, followed by Sir William and Lady Ashton, and one or two others, near relations of the family. The bridal guests waited their return in stupified amazement.

Arrived at the door of the apartment, Colonel Ashton knocked and called, but received no answer except stifled groans. He hesitated no longer to open the door of the apartment, in which he found opposition from something which lay against it. When he had succeeded in opening it, the body of the bridegroom was found lying on the threshold of the bridal chamber, and all around was flooded with blood. A cry of surprise and horror was raised by all present; and

BUCKLAW WAS RAISED FROM THE GROUND.
From a painting by W. E. Lockhart, A.R.S.A.



the company, excited by this new alarm, began to rush tumultuously towards the sleeping apartment. Colonel Ashton, first whispering to his mother — 'Search for her; she has murdered him!' drew his sword, planted himself in the passage, and declared he would suffer no man to pass excepting the clergyman and a medical person present. By their assistance, Bucklaw, who still breathed, was raised from the ground, and transported to another apartment, where his friends, full of suspicion and murmuring, assembled round him to learn the opinion of the surgeon.

In the meanwhile, Lady Ashton, her husband, and their assistants in vain sought Lucy in the bridal bed and in the chamber. There was no private passage from the room, and they began to think that she must have thrown herself from the window, when one of the company, holding his torch lower than the rest, discovered something white in the corner of the great old-fashioned chimney of the apartment. Here they found the unfortunate girl seated, or rather couched like a hare upon its form — her head-gear dishevelled, her night-clothes torn and dabbled with blood, her eyes glazed, and her features convulsed into a wild paroxysm of insanity. When she saw herself discovered, she gibbered, made mouths, and pointed at them with her bloody fingers, with the frantic gestures of an exulting demoniac.

Female assistance was now hastily summoned; the unhappy bride was overpowered, not without the use of some force. As they carried her over the threshold, she looked down, and uttered the only articulate words that she had yet spoken, saying with a sort of grinning exultation — 'So, you have ta'en up your bonny bridegroom?' She was, by the shuddering assistants, conveyed to another and more retired apartment, where she was secured as her situation required, and closely watched. The unutterable agony of the parents, the horror and confusion of all who were in the castle, the fury of contending passions between the friends of the different parties — passions augmented by previous intemperance — surpass description.

The surgeon was the first who obtained something like a patient hearing; he pronounced that the wound of Bucklaw, though severe and dangerous, was by no means fatal, but might readily be rendered so by disturbance and hasty removal. This silenced the numerous party of Bucklaw's friends, who had previously insisted that he should, at all

rates, be transported from the castle to the nearest of their houses. They still demanded, however, that, in consideration of what had happened, four of their number should remain to watch over the sick-bed of their friend, and that a suitable number of their domestics, well armed, should also remain in the castle. This condition being acceded to on the part of Colonel Ashton and his father, the rest of the bridegroom's friends left the castle, notwithstanding the hour and the darkness of the night. The cares of the medical man were next employed in behalf of Miss Ashton, whom he pronounced to be in a very dangerous state. Farther medical assistance was immediately summoned. All night she remained delirious. On the morning, she fell into a state of absolute insensibility. The next evening, the physicians said, would be the crisis of her malady. It proved so; for although she awoke from her trance with some appearance of calmness, and suffered her night-clothes to be changed, or put in order, yet, so soon as she put her hand to her neck, as if to search for the fatal blue ribbon, a tide of recollections seemed to rush upon her, which her mind and body were alike incapable of bearing. Convulsion followed convulsion, till they closed in death, without her being able to utter a word explanatory of the fatal scene.

The provincial judge of the district arrived the day after the young lady had expired, and executed, though with all possible delicacy to the afflicted family, the painful duty of inquiring into this fatal transaction. But there occurred nothing to explain the general hypothesis that the bride, in a sudden fit of insanity, had stabbed the bridegroom at the threshold of the apartment. The fatal weapon was found in the chamber smeared with blood. It was the same poniard which Henry should have worn on the wedding-day, and which his unhappy sister had probably contrived to secrete on the preceding evening, when it had been shown to her among other articles of preparation for the wedding.

The friends of Bucklaw expected that on his recovery he would throw some light upon this dark story, and eagerly pressed him with inquiries, which for some time he evaded under pretext of weakness. When, however, he had been transported to his own house, and was considered as in a state of convalescence, he assembled those persons, both male and female, who had considered themselves as entitled to press him on this subject, and returned them thanks for the interest they had exhibited in his behalf, and their offers of adherence and

support. 'I wish you all,' he said, 'my friends, to understand, however, that I have neither story to tell nor injuries to avenge. If a lady shall question me henceforward upon the incidents of that unhappy night, I shall remain silent, and in future consider her as one who has shown herself desirous to break off her friendship with me; in a word, I will never speak to her again. But if a gentleman shall ask me the same question, I shall regard the incivility as equivalent to an invitation to meet him in the Duke's Walk,[1] and I expect that he will rule himself accordingly.'

A declaration so decisive admitted no commentary; and it was soon after seen that Bucklaw had arisen from the bed of sickness a sadder and a wiser man than he had hitherto shown himself. He dismissed Craigengelt from his society, but not without such a provision as, if well employed, might secure him against indigence and against temptation.

Bucklaw afterwards went abroad, and never returned to Scotland; nor was he known ever to hint at the circumstances attending his fatal marriage. By many readers this may be deemed overstrained, romantic, and composed by the wild imagination of an author desirous of gratifying the popular appetite for the horrible; but those who are read in the private family history of Scotland during the period in which the scene is laid, will readily discover, through the disguise of borrowed names and added incidents, the leading particulars of AN OWER TRUE TALE.

[1] See Note 12.

CHAPTER XXXV

Whose mind 's so marbled, and his heart so hard,
That would not, when this huge mishap was heard,
To th' utmost note of sorrow set their song,
To see a gallant, with so great a grace,
So suddenly unthought on, so o'erthrown,
And so to perish, in so poor a place,
By too rash riding in a ground unknown!

POEM, IN NISBET'S *Heraldry*, vol. ii.

WE have anticipated the course of time to mention Bucklaw's recovery and fate, that we might not interrupt the detail of events which succeeded the funeral of the unfortunate Lucy Ashton. This melancholy ceremony was performed in the misty dawn of an autumnal morning, with such moderate attendance and ceremony as could not possibly be dispensed with. A very few of the nearest relations attended her body to the same church-yard to which she had lately been led as a bride, with as little free will, perhaps, as could be now testified by her lifeless and passive remains. An aisle adjacent to the church had been fitted up by Sir William Ashton as a family cemetery; and here, in a coffin bearing neither name nor date, were consigned to dust the remains of what was once lovely, beautiful, and innocent, though exasperated to frenzy by a long tract of unremitting persecution.

While the mourners were busy in the vault, the three village hags, who, notwithstanding the unwonted earliness of the hour, had snuffed the carrion like vultures, were seated on the 'through-stane,' and engaged in their wonted unhallowed conference.

'Did not I say,' said Dame Gourlay, 'that the braw bridal would be followed by as braw a funeral?'

'I think,' answered Dame Winnie, 'there 's little bravery at it: neither meat nor drink, and just a wheen silver tippences to the poor folk; it was little worth while to come sae far road for sae sma' profit, and us sae frail.'

'Out, wretch!' replied Dame Gourlay, 'can a' the dainties they could gie us be half sae sweet as this hour's vengeance? There they are that were capering on their prancing nags four days since, and they are now ganging as dreigh and sober as oursells the day. They were a' glistening wi' gowd and silver; they 're now as black as the crook. And Miss Lucy Ashton, that grudged when an honest woman came near her — a taid may sit on her coffin the day, and she can never scunner when he croaks. And Lady Ashton has hell-fire burning in her breast by this time; and Sir William, wi' his gibbets, and his faggots, and his chains, how likes he the witcheries of his ain dwelling-house?'

'And is it true, then,' mumbled the paralytic wretch, 'that the bride was trailed out of her bed and up the chimley by evil spirits, and that the bridegroom's face was wrung round ahint him?'

'Ye needna care wha did it, or how it was done,' said Ailsie Gourlay; 'but I 'll uphaud it for nae stickit[1] job, and that the lairds and leddies ken weel this day.'

'And was it true,' said Annie Winnie, 'sin ye ken sae muckle about it, that the picture of auld Sir Malise Ravenswood came down on the ha' floor, and led out the brawl before them a'?'

'Na,' said Ailsie; 'but into the ha' came the picture — and I ken weel how it came there — to gie them a warning that pride wad get a fa'. But there 's as queer a ploy, cummers, as ony o' thae, that 's gaun on even now in the burial vault yonder: ye saw twall mourners, wi' crape and cloak, gang down the steps pair and pair?'

'What should ail us to see them?' said the one old woman.

'I counted them,' said the other, with the eagerness of a person to whom the spectacle had afforded too much interest to be viewed with indifference.

'But ye did not see,' said Ailsie, exulting in her superior observation, 'that there 's a thirteenth amang them that they ken naething about; and, if auld freits say true, there 's ane o' that company that 'll no be lang for this warld. But come awa', cummers; if we bide here, I'se warrant we get the wyte o' whatever ill comes of it, and that gude will come of it nane o' them need ever think to see.'

And thus, croaking like the ravens when they anticipate pestilence, the ill-boding sibyls withdrew from the churchyard.

In fact, the mourners, when the service of interment was

[1] *Stickit*, imperfect.

ended, discovered that there was among them one more than the invited number, and the remark was communicated in whispers to each other. The suspicion fell upon a figure which, muffled in the same deep mourning with the others, was reclined, almost in a state of insensibility, against one of the pillars of the sepulchral vault. The relatives of the Ashton family were expressing in whispers their surprise and displeasure at the intrusion, when they were interrupted by Colonel Ashton, who, in his father's absence, acted as principal mourner. 'I know,' he said in a whisper, 'who this person is; he has, or shall soon have, as deep cause of mourning as ourselves: leave me to deal with him, and do not disturb the ceremony by unnecessary exposure.' So saying, he separated himself from the group of his relations, and taking the unknown mourner by the cloak, he said to him, in a tone of suppressed emotion, 'Follow me.'

The stranger, as if starting from a trance at the sound of his voice, mechanically obeyed, and they ascended the broken ruinous stair which led from the sepulchre into the churchyard. The other mourners followed, but remained grouped together at the door of the vault, watching with anxiety the motions of Colonel Ashton and the stranger, who now appeared to be in close conference beneath the shade of a yew-tree, in the most remote part of the burial-ground.

To this sequestered spot Colonel Ashton had guided the stranger, and then turning round, addressed him in a stern and composed tone. — 'I cannot doubt that I speak to the Master of Ravenswood?' No answer was returned. 'I cannot doubt,' resumed the Colonel, trembling with rising passion, 'that I speak to the murderer of my sister?'

'You have named me but too truly,' said Ravenswood, in a hollow and tremulous voice.

'If you repent what you have done,' said the Colonel, 'may your penitence avail you before God; with me it shall serve you nothing. Here,' he said, giving a paper, 'is the measure of my sword, and a memorandum of the time and place of meeting. Sunrise to-morrow morning, on the links to the east of Wolf's Hope.'

The Master of Ravenswood held the paper in his hand, and seemed irresolute. At length he spoke — 'Do not,' he said, 'urge to farther desperation a wretch who is already desperate. Enjoy your life while you can, and let me seek my death from another.'

'That you never, never shall!' said Douglas Ashton. 'You

shall die by my hand, or you shall complete the ruin of my family by taking my life. If you refuse my open challenge, there is no advantage I will not take of you, no indignity with which I will not load you, until the very name of Ravenswood shall be the sign of everything that is dishonourable, as it is already of all that is villainous.'

'That it shall never be,' said Ravenswood, fiercely; 'if I am the last who must bear it, I owe it to those who once owned it that the name shall be extinguished without infamy. I accept your challenge, time, and place of meeting. We meet, I presume, alone?'

'Alone we meet,' said Colonel Ashton, 'and alone will the survivor of us return from that place of rendezvous.'

'Then God have mercy on the soul of him who falls!' said Ravenswood.

'So be it!' said Colonel Ashton; 'so far can my charity reach even for the man I hate most deadly, and with the deepest reason. Now, break off, for we shall be interrupted. The links by the sea-shore to the east of Wolf's Hope; the hour, sunrise; our swords our only weapons.'

'Enough,' said the Master, 'I will not fail you.'

They separated; Colonel Ashton joining the rest of the mourners, and the Master of Ravenswood taking his horse, which was tied to a tree behind the church. Colonel Ashton returned to the castle with the funeral guests, but found a pretext for detaching himself from them in the evening, when, changing his dress to a riding-habit, he rode to Wolf's Hope that night, and took up his abode in the little inn, in order that he might be ready for his rendezvous in the morning.

It is not known how the Master of Ravenswood disposed of the rest of that unhappy day. Late at night, however, he arrived at Wolf's Crag, and aroused his old domestic, Caleb Balderstone, who had ceased to expect his return. Confused and flying rumours of the late tragical death of Miss Ashton, and of its mysterious cause, had already reached the old man, who was filled with the utmost anxiety, on account of the probable effect these events might produce upon the mind of his master.

The conduct of Ravenswood did not alleviate his apprehensions. To the butler's trembling entreaties that he would take some refreshment, he at first returned no answer, and then suddenly and fiercely demanding wine, he drank, contrary

to his habits, a very large draught. Seeing that his master would eat nothing, the old man affectionately entreated that he would permit him to light him to his chamber. It was not until the request was three or four times repeated that Ravenswood made a mute sign of compliance. But when Balderstone conducted him to an apartment which had been comfortably fitted up, and which, since his return, he had usually occupied, Ravenswood stopped short on the threshold.

'Not here,' said he, sternly; 'show me the room in which my father died; the room in which SHE slept the night they were at the castle.'

'Who, sir?' said Caleb, too terrified to preserve his presence of mind.

'*She*, Lucy Ashton! Would you kill me, old man, by forcing me to repeat her name?'

Caleb would have said something of the disrepair of the chamber, but was silenced by the irritable impatience which was expressed in his master's countenance; he lighted the way trembling and in silence, placed the lamp on the table of the desolate room, and was about to attempt some arrangement of the bed, when his master bid him begone in a tone that admitted of no delay. The old man retired, not to rest, but to prayer; and from time to time crept to the door of the apartment, in order to find out whether Ravenswood had gone to repose. His measured heavy step upon the floor was only interrupted by deep groans, and the repeated stamps of the heel of his heavy boot intimated too clearly that the wretched inmate was abandoning himself at such moments to paroxysms of uncontrolled agony. The old man thought that the morning, for which he longed, would never have dawned; but time, whose course rolls on with equal current, however it may seem more rapid or more slow to mortal apprehension, brought the dawn at last, and spread a ruddy light on the broad verge of the glistening ocean. It was early in November, and the weather was serene for the season of the year. But an easterly wind had prevailed during the night, and the advancing tide rolled nearer than usual to the foot of the crags on which the castle was founded.

With the first peep of light, Caleb Balderstone again resorted to the door of Ravenswood's sleeping apartment, through a chink of which he observed him engaged in measuring the length of two or three swords which lay in a closet adjoining to the apartment. He muttered to himself, as he selected one of these

weapons—'It is shorter: let him have this advantage, as he has every other.'

Caleb Balderstone knew too well, from what he witnessed, upon what enterprise his master was bound, and how vain all interference on his part must necessarily prove. He had but time to retreat from the door, so nearly was he surprised by his master suddenly coming out and descending to the stables. The faithful domestic followed; and, from the dishevelled appearance of his master's dress, and his ghastly looks, was confirmed in his conjecture that he had passed the night without sleep or repose. He found him busily engaged in saddling his horse, a service from which Caleb, though with faltering voice and trembling hands, offered to relieve him. Ravenswood rejected his assistance by a mute sign, and having led the animal into the court, was just about to mount him, when the old domestic's fear giving way to the strong attachment which was the principal passion of his mind, he flung himself suddenly at Ravenswood's feet, and clasped his knees, while he exclaimed, 'Oh, sir! oh, master! kill me if you will, but do not go out on this dreadful errand! Oh! my dear master, wait but this day; the Marquis of A—— comes to-morrow, and a' will be remedied.'

'You have no longer a master, Caleb,' said Ravenswood, endeavouring to extricate himself; 'why, old man, would you cling to a falling tower?'

'But I *have* a master,' cried Caleb, still holding him fast, 'while the heir of Ravenswood breathes. I am but a servant; but I was born your father's—your grandfather's servant. I was born for the family—I have lived for them—I would die for them! Stay but at home, and all will be well!'

'Well, fool! well?' said Ravenswood. 'Vain old man, nothing hereafter in life will be well with me, and happiest is the hour that shall soonest close it!'

So saying, he extricated himself from the old man's hold, threw himself on his horse, and rode out at the gate; but instantly turning back, he threw towards Caleb, who hastened to meet him, a heavy purse of gold.

'Caleb!' he said, with a ghastly smile, 'I make you my executor'; and again turning his bridle, he resumed his course down the hill.

The gold fell unheeded on the pavement, for the old man ran to observe the course which was taken by his master, who turned to the left down a small and broken path, which gained the sea-shore through a cleft in the rock, and led to a sort of

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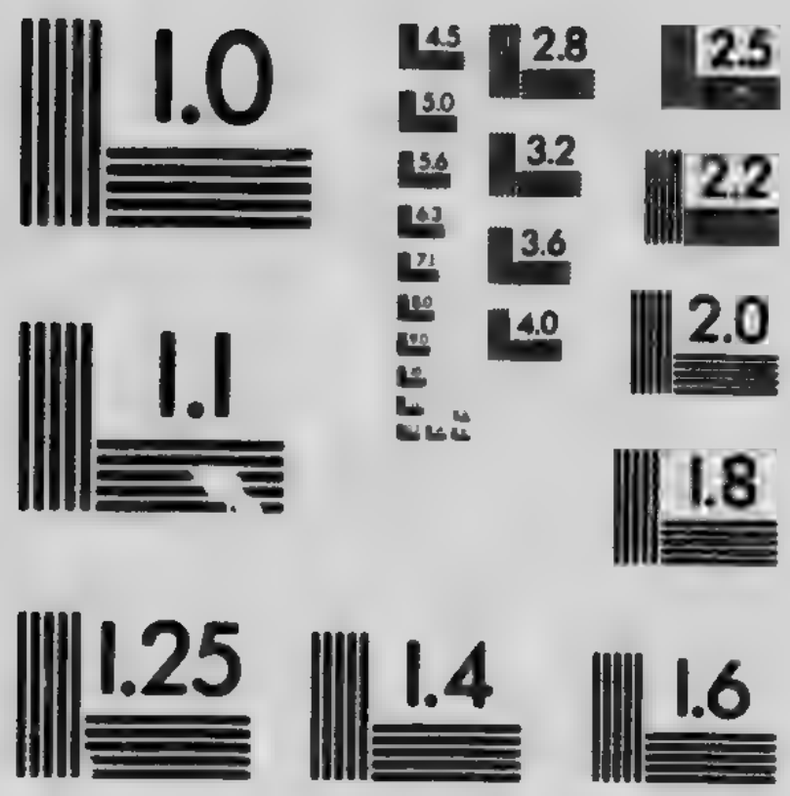

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cove where, in former times, the boats of the castle were wont to be moored. Observing him take this course, Caleb hastened to the eastern battlement, which commanded the prospect of the whole sands, very near as far as the village of Wolf's Hope. He could easily see his master riding in that direction, as fast as the horse could carry him. The prophecy at once rushed on Balderstone's mind, that the Lord of Ravenswood should perish on the Kelpie's flow, which lay half-way betwixt the Tower and the links, or sand knolls, to the northward of Wolf's Hope. He saw him accordingly reach the fatal spot; but he never saw him pass further.

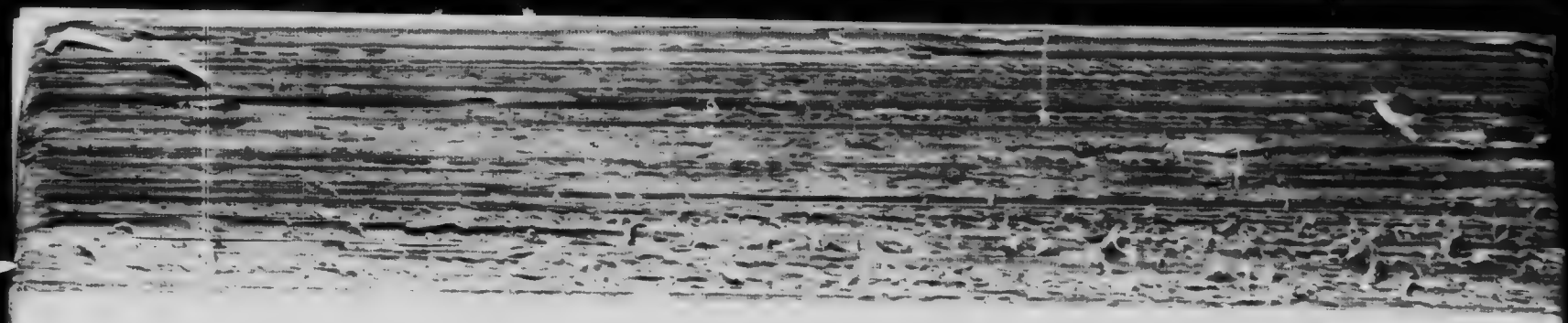
Colonel Ashton, frantic for revenge, was already in the field, pacing the turf with eagerness, and looking with impatience towards the Tower for the arrival of his antagonist. The sun had now risen, and showed its broad disk above the eastern sea, so that he could easily discern the horseman who rode towards him with speed which argued impatience equal to his own. At once the figure became invisible, as if it had melted into the air. He rubbed his eyes, as if he had witnessed an apparition, and then hastened to the spot, near which he was met by Balderstone, who came from the opposite direction. No trace whatever of horse or rider could be discerned; it only appeared that the late winds and high tides had greatly extended the usual bounds of the quicksand, and that the unfortunate horseman, as appeared from the hoof tracks, in his precipitated haste, had not attended to keep on the firm sands on the foot of the rock, but had taken the shortest and most dangerous course. One only vestige of his fate appeared. A large sable feather had been detached from his hat, and the rippling waves of the rising tide wafted it to Caleb's feet. The old man took it up, dried it, and placed it in his bosom.

The inhabitants of Wolf's Hope were now alarmed, and crowded to the place, some on shore, and some in boats, but their search availed nothing. The tenacious depths of the quicksand, as is usual in such cases, retained its prey.

Our tale draws to a conclusion. The Marquis of A , alarmed at the frightful reports that were current, and anxious for his kinsman's safety, arrived on the subsequent day to mourn his loss: and, after renewing in vain a search for the body, returned, to forget what had happened amid the bustle of politics and state affairs.

Not so Caleb Balderstone. If worldly profit could have consoled the old man, his age was better provided for than his earlier life had ever been; but life had lost to him its salt and its savour. His whole course of ideas, his feelings, whether of pride or of apprehension, of pleasure or of pain, had all arisen from his close connexion with the family which was now extinguished. He held up his head no longer, forsook all his usual haunts and occupations, and seemed only to find pleasure in moping about those apartments in the old castle which the Master of Ravenswood had last inhabited. He ate without refreshment, and slumbered without repose; and, with a fidelity sometimes displayed by the canine race, but seldom by human beings, he pined and died within a year after the catastrophe which we have narrated.

The family of Ashton did not long survive that of Ravenswood. Sir William Ashton outlived his eldest son, the Colonel, who was slain in a duel in Flanders; and Henry, by whom he was succeeded, died unmarried. Lady Ashton lived to the verge of extreme old age, the only survivor of the group of unhappy persons whose misfortunes were owing to her implacability. That she might internally feel compunction, and reconcile herself with Heaven, whom she had offended, we will not, and we dare not, deny; but to those around her she did not evince the slightest symptom either of repentance or remorse. In all external appearance she bore the same bold, haughty, unbending character which she had displayed before these unhappy events. A splendid marble monument records her name, titles, and virtues, while her victims remain undistinguished by tomb or epitaph.



NOTES TO THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR

Note 1. — The Family of Stair, p. ix

[It may be regretted that the Author had not adhered to his original purpose as here stated. In his Introduction to the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, when referring to the sources or materials of his novels, he says, 'I may mention, for example's sake, that the terrible catastrophe of the *Bride of Lammermoor* actually occurred in a Scottish family of rank. . . . It is unnecessary further to withdraw the real veil from this scene of family distress, nor, although it occurred more than a hundred years since, might it be altogether agreeable to the representatives of the families concerned in the narrative. It may be proper to say, that the events are imitated; but *I had neither the means nor intention of copying the manners, or tracing the characters, of the persons concerned in the real story.*'

The regret, however, is not in his stating that the tragical event said to have happened in the family of Dalrymple of Stair in 1669 had suggested the catastrophe, but in seemingly connecting the story itself with the history of that family, by quoting so fully the scandal and satirical verses of a later period. — *Laing.*]

Note 2. — Sir G. Lockhart, p. 38

President of the Court of Session. He was pistolled in the High Street of Edinburgh, by John Chiesley of Dalry, in the year 1689. The revenge of this desperate man was stimulated by an opinion that he had sustained injustice in a decreet-arbitral pronounced by the President, assigning an alimentary provision of about £93 in favour of his wife and children. He is said at first to have designed to shoot the judge while attending upon divine worship, but was diverted by some feeling concerning the sanctity of the place. After the congregation was dismissed, he dogged his victim as far as the h[illegible] of the close, on the south side of the Lawnmarket, in which the President's house was situated, and shot him dead as he was about to enter it. This act was done in the presence of numerous spectators. The assassin made no attempt to fly, but boasted of the deed, saying, 'I have taught the President how to do justice.' He had at least given him fair warning, as Jack Cade says on a similar occasion. The murderer, after undergoing the torture, by a special act of the Estates of Parliament, was tried before the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, as high sheriff, and condemned to be dragged on a hurdle to the place of execution, to have his right hand struck off while he yet lived, and, finally, to be hung on the gallows with the pistol wherewith he shot the President tied round his neck. This execution took place on the 3d of April 1689; and the incident was long remembered as a dreadful instance of what the law books call the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum.*

Note 3. — The Ballantynes, p. 81

James Ballantyne, the eminent printer, was the eldest of three sons of a small merchant in Kelso. He was born in 1772, and became acquainted with Sir Walter Scott so early as 1784, when attending the grammar school. Having established a printing office, he started a local newspaper, called the *Kelso Mail*; and in 1799 there issued from his press Scott's *Apology for Tales of Terror*, of which only twelve copies were thrown off. This was followed by the first edition of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, in 1802, a work that was considered such an admirable specimen of typography that Ballantyne was induced to remove to Edinburgh, where for thirty years he carried on a printing establishment with great success, leaving his younger brother Alexander at Kelso to look after the newspaper.

John Ballantyne, the second son, was born in 1774. He commenced his career at Kelso, in September 1813, by the sale of that portion of the celebrated library of John Duke of Roxburghe which remained at Fleurs Castle. On coming to Edinburgh, he was for a time connected with the printing office; but afterwards turned auctioneer and bookseller, and became the publisher of several of Scott's Poems and Novels. 'Jocund Johnny,' as Scott sometimes called him, was a person of a volatile and joyous disposition, a most amusing companion, having the credit of being the best story-teller of his time. The state of his health, however, obliged him to relinquish business, and he died 16th June 1821.

James, who devoted much of his time to theatrical criticism and journalism, died within four months of Sir Walter Scott, in January 1833. He assisted the Author of these novels in revising the proof sheets and suggesting minute corrections (*Laing*).

Note 4. — George Buchanan's Jests, p. 110

Referring probably to a popular chap-book, entitled *The Witty and Entertaining Exploits of George Buchanan, who was commonly called the King's Fool: the whole six parts complete*, 1781. This character was jester to Charles I., and must not be mistaken for his learned namesake (*Laing*).

Note 5. — Raid of Caleb Balderstone, p. 131

The raid of Caleb Balderstone on the cooper's kitchen has been universally considered on the southern side of the Tweed as grotesquely and absurdly extravagant. The Author can only say, that a similar anecdote was communicated to him, with date and names of the parties, by a noble earl lately deceased, whose remembrances of former days, both in Scotland and England, while they were given with a felicity and power of humour never to be forgotten by those who had the happiness of meeting his lordship in familiar society, were especially invaluable from their extreme accuracy.

Speaking after my kind and lamented informer, with the omission of names only, the anecdote ran thus:— There was a certain bachelor gentleman in one of the midland counties of Scotland, second son of an ancient family, who lived on the fortune of a second son, *ridelicet*, upon some miserably small annuity, which yet was so managed and stretched out by the expedients of his man John, that his master kept the front rank with all the young men of quality in the county, and hunted, dined, diced, and drank with them upon apparently equal terms.

It is true that, as the master's society was extremely amusing, his friends contrived to reconcile his man John to accept assistance of various kinds 'under the rose,' which they dared not to have directly offered to his mas-

ter. Yet, very consistently with all this good inclination to John and John's master, it was thought among the young fox-hunters that it would be an excellent jest, if possible, to take John at fault.

With this intention, and, I think, in consequence of a bet, a party of four or five of these youngsters arrived at the bachelor's little mansion, which was adjacent to a considerable village. Here they alighted a short while before the dinner hour - - for it was judged regular to give John's ingenuity a fair start — and, rushing past the astonished domestic, entered the little parlour; and, telling some concerted story of the cause of their invasion, the self-invited guests asked their landlord if he could let them have some dinner. Their friend gave them a hearty and unembarrassed reception, and for the matter of dinner, referred them to John. He was summoned accordingly; received his master's orders to get dinner ready for the party who had thus unexpectedly arrived; and, without changing a muscle of his countenance, promised prompt obedience. Great was the speculation of the visitors, and probably of the landlord also, what was to be the issue of John's fair promises. Some of the more curious had taken a peep into the kitchen, and could see nothing there to realise the prospect held out by the major domo. But, punctual as the dinner hour struck on the village clock, John placed before them a stately rump of boiled beef, with a proper accompaniment of greens, amply sufficient to dine the whole party, and to decide the bet against those among the visitors who expected to take John napping. The explanation was the same as in the case of Caleb Balderstone. John had used the freedom to carry off the hail-pot of a rich old chuff in the village, and brought it to his master's house, leaving the proprietor and his friends to dine on bread and cheese; and, as John said, 'good enough for them.' The fear of giving offence to so many persons of distinction kept the poor man sufficiently quiet, and he was afterwards remunerated by some indirect patronage, so that the jest was admitted a good one on all sides. In England, at any period, or in some parts of Scotland at the present day, it might not have passed off so well.

Note 6. — Ancient Hospitality, p. 135

It was once the universal custom to place ale, wine, or some strong liquor in the chamber of an honoured guest, to assuage his thirst, should he feel any on awakening in the night, which, considering that the hospitality of that period often reached excess, was by no means unlikely. The Author has met some instances of it in former days, and in old fashioned families. It was, perhaps, no poetic fiction that records how

> My cummer and I lay down to sleep
> With two pint-stoups at our bed-feet;
> And aye when we waken'd we drank them dry:
> What think you o' my cummer and I?

It is a current story in Teviotdale, that in the house of an ancient family of distinction, much addicted to the Presbyterian cause, a Bible was always put into the sleeping apartment of the guests, along with a bottle of strong ale. On some occasion there was a meeting of clergymen in the vicinity of the castle, all of whom were invited to dinner by the worthy baronet, and several abode all night. According to the fashion of the times, seven of the reverend guests were allotted to one large barrack room, which was used on such occasions of extended hospitality. The butler took care that the divines were presented, according to custom, each with a Bible and a bottle of ale. But after a little consultation among themselves, they are said to have recalled the domestic as he was leaving the apartment. 'My friend,' said one of the venerable guests, 'you must know, when we meet together as brethren, the youngest minister reads aloud a portion of Scripture to

the rest: only one Bible, therefore, is necessary; take away the other six, and in their place bring six more bottles of ale.'

The [illegible] would have suited the 'hermit sage' of Johnson, who answered a pupil [illegible] inquired for the real road to happiness with the celebrated line,

Come, my lad, and drink some beer!

Note 7. — Appeal to Parliament, p. 149

The power of appeal from the Court of Session, the supreme Judges of Scotland, to the Scottish Parliament, in cases of civil right, was fiercely debated before the Union. It was a privilege highly desirable for the subject, as the examination and occasional reversal of their sentences in Parliament might serve as a check upon the judges, which they greatly required at a time when they were much more distinguished for legal knowledge than for uprightness and integrity.

The members of the Faculty of Advocates (so the Scottish barristers are termed), in the year 1674, incurred the violent displeasure of the Court of Session, on account of their refusal to renounce the right of appeal to Parliament; and, by a very arbitrary procedure, the majority of the number were banished from Edinburgh, and consequently deprived of their professional practice, for several sessions, or terms. But, by the articles of the Union, an appeal to the British House of Peers has been secured to the Scottish subject, and that right has, no doubt, had its influence in forming the impartial and independent character which, much contrary to the practice of their predecessors, the Judges of the Court of Session have since displayed.

It is easy to conceive that an old lawyer like the Lord Keeper in the text should feel alarm at the judgments given in his favour, upon grounds of strict penal law, being brought to appeal under a new and dreaded procedure in a Court eminently impartial, and peculiarly moved by considerations of equity.

In earlier editions of this Work, this legal distinction was not sufficiently explained.

Note 8. — Poor-Man-of-Mutton, p. 172

The blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton is called in Scotland 'a poor man,' as in some parts of England it is termed 'a poor knight of Windsor'; in contrast, it must be presumed, to the baronial Sir Loin. It is said that, in the last age, an old Scottish peer, whose conditions (none of the most gentle) were marked by a strange and fierce-looking exaggeration of the Highland countenance, chanced to be indisposed while he was in London attending Parliament. The master of the hotel where he lodged, anxious to show attention to his noble guest, waited on him to enumerate the contents of his well stocked larder, so as to endeavour to hit on something which might suit his appetite. 'I think, landlord,' said his lordship, rising up from his couch, and throwing back the tartan plaid with which he had screened his grim and ferocious visage—'I think I could eat a morsel of a *poor man*.' The landlord fled in terror, having no doubt that his guest was a cannibal, who might be in the habit of eating a slice of a tenant, as light food, when he was under regimen.

Note 9. — Middleton's 'Mad World,' p. 204

Hereupon I, Jedediah Cleishbotham, crave leave to remark *primo*, which signifies, in the first place, that, having in vain inquired at the circulating library in Gandercleugh, albeit it aboundeth in similar vanities, for this samyn Middleton and his *Mad World*, it was at length shown unto me

amongst other ancient fooleries carefully compiled by one Dodsley,[1] who, doubtless, hath his reward for neglect of serious time; and having misused so much of mine as was necessary for the purpose, I therein found that a play-man is brought in as a footman, whom a knight is made to greet facetiously with the epithet of 'linen stocking, and three score miles a-day.'

Secundo, which is secondly in the vernacular, under Mr. Pattieson's favour, some men not altogether so old as he would represent them, do remember this species of menial, or forerunner. In evidence of which, I, Jedediah Cleishbotham, though mine eyes yet do me good service, remember me to have seen one of this tribe clothed in white, and bearing a staff, who ran daily before the state-coach of the unquhile John Earl of Hopeton, father of this Earl, Charles, that now is; unto whom it may be justly said, that renown playeth the part of a running footman, or precursor; and, as the poet singeth —

> Mars standing by asserts his quarrel,
> And Fame flies after with a laurel.

J. C.

NOTE 10. — TRUMPETER MARINE AT SHERIFFMUIR, p. 228

The battle of Sheriffmuir, which took place in November 1715, was claimed as a victory by both sides. This gave rise to a clever popular song printed at the time as a broadside, under the title of *A Race at Sheriffmuir, fairly run on the 15th November 1715, to the tune of 'The Horseman's Sport.'*

> There 's some say that we wan, some say that they wan,
> Some say that nane wan at a', man;
> But one thing I 'm sure, that at Sheriffmuir
> A battle there was, which I saw, man.
> And we ran, and they ran, and they ran, and we ran,
> And we ran, and they ran awa', man.

In these satirical verses Trumpeter Marine is introduced, and in proof of Sir Walter's accuracy as to the name, the following note may be added, as recent editors of this ballad have altered it to Maclean:

In the *Present State of Great Britain*, London, 1710, Francis Marine is second on the list of Queen Anne's Trumpeters for Scotland, while in the volume for 1716 his name occurs among the officers of the king's household, as 'Francis Marine, Sen.,' and there is added as fifth trumpeter, 'Francis Marine, Jun.' These household trumpeters were employed, as they are to this day in the Lyon Office, for announcing royal proclamations, and attending the Circuit Courts of Justiciary. Another son or grandson, named James Marine, continues to appear as trumpeter down to 1785.

The words referred to, in the original ballad of Sheriffmuir, are as follow: —

> And Trumpet Marine too, whose breeks were not clean, through
> Misfortune he happen'd to fa', man:
> By saving his neck, his trumpet did break,
> Came off without musick at a', man.
> And we ran, and they ran, etc.

No doubt there was a John Maclean, trumpeter, sent on a message from the rebels to the Duke of Argyle before the battle, but the modern improvers have spoiled the verses both as to rhyme and accuracy; while they have overlooked the description of the trumpeter's dress, which would evidently indicate his not being a Highlander (*Laing*).

[1] See Dodsley's *Collection of Old Plays*, vol. v. p. 307 (*Laing*).

NOTE 11. — CURING BY CHARMS, p. 299

Reginald Scott tells of an old woman who performed so many cures by means of a charm that she was suspected of witchcraft. Her mode of practice being inquired into, it was found that the only fee which she would accept of was a loaf of bread and a silver penny: and that the potent charm with which she wrought so many cures was the doggerel couplet in the text

NOTE 12. — DUKE'S WALK, p. 305

A walk in the vicinity of Holyrood House, so called, because often frequented by the Duke of York, afterwards James II., during his residence in Scotland. It was for a long time the usual place of rendezvous for settling affairs of honour

GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

Ane, alone
Anblaze, in a blaze
Aboon, abune, above, up
Abou Hassan. *See The Arabian Nights*: 'The Sleeper Awakened'
Adjudication, an action for seizing upon a heritable estate as security for a debt — a Scots law term
Ae-edificandam (p. 95), to set up an ancient house again
Ae, one
Agt, to act as may be necessary and legal — a Scots law term
Ail, to interfere with, prevent
Ain, own
Airt, to direct, turn; a point
Aits, oats; **ait-cake**, oat-cake
Aiver, or aver, an old broken-winded horse
Alexander, a tragedy by Nathaniel Lee, very popular in the early part of the 18th century
Allenarly, solely, alone
once
w Ferrara, a High- broadsword
. . . ots, Earl of, presumably Archibald, sixth earl, exiled by James V. in 1528
Aroint, avaunt
Ass. ish
Auld Reekie, Edinburgh
Ava, at all
Avant-courier, a forerunner, messenger sent on in advance
Awe, to owe

Back-shy, the sirloin
Backsword, a sword with only one cutting edge
Bard of Hope, Thomas Campbell, author of *Pleasures of Hope*
Bass, a conspicuous mass of rock in the Firth of Forth, not far from North Berwick
Bawbee, a halfpenny
Bedesman, an alms-man, one that prays for another
Bedral, a beadle, sexton
Beflumm, to befool, cajole
Bell the cat, synonymous with 'Beard the lion in his den.' The phrase originated among the Scottish nobles who conspired to ruin James III.'s favourite, Cochran. *See* Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, chap. xxii.
Bended, cocked
Bend-leather, thick leather for boot soles
Berwick, Duke of. James Fitz-James, the natural son of King James II. of England, was made a marshal of France
Bicker, a wooden drinking cup
Bickering (fire), flickering, quivering
Bide, to wait, stay
Biggonet, a linen cap, coif
Birkie, a lively little fellow; the game of beggar-my-neighbour
Birling, drinking in company
Bit and the buffet, sustenance with hard usage
Blackavised, black-visaged
Black-jack, a large waxed pitcher for holding ale

Blackness, a castle, and formerly a state prison, situated on the Firth of Forth, Linlithgowshire
Blithe, cheerful, happy, pleased
Boggle, a bogie, ghost
Bothwell Brig. *See Old Mortality*, chaps. xxxi. and xxxii.
Bouk, a body, carcase, bulk of body
Boul, a handle
Bourock, a mound, barrow, heap of earth; a miserable hut
Brach, a hunting-hound
Brae, a hill; **braeside**, a hillside
Brander, to broil, grill
Braw, brave, fine
Brawl, a French dance, cotillion
Brent, straight and smooth
Brewis, the scum caused by boiling
Brewster, a brewer
Bride in, taken to the bridal chamber
Broche, a roasting-spit
Bruce to kill a spider, an allusion to the story of Robert Bruce and the spider
Busk, to deck, bind up

Cabage, to cut off a deer's head behind the horns
Cairnach, or Buck of Cairnach, a mountain near the western boundary of Aberdeenshire
Caigy, cheerful, sportive
Calculating, cackling, laughing
Callant, a young lad

CAMPAIGN OF ——. *See* Spanish general.
CAMPVERE, or CAMPHIRE, a small Dutch town on the island of Walcheren, where from 1444 to 1795 the Scots had a privileged trading factory
CANNON-BIT, a smooth round bit for horses
CANNY, careful, shrewd, useful; (in the negative) peculiar, possessed
CANTABIT VACUUS, he may sing before thieves who has empty pockets — Juvenal, xi. 22
CANTRIPS, tricks, spells, incantations
CANTY, cheerful, merry
CAPOT, to win all the tricks in piquet, a form of exclamation
CARBONADE, to broil, grill
CARCAKE, a small cake eaten on Shrove Tuesday
CARLE, a fellow
CARLINE, an old woman, jade
CAST O', kind of
CASTOR, a fur hat
CAUGHT IN THE MANNER, caught in a criminal act
CAULD BE MY CAST, cold be my fate or lot
CAVESSON, a horse's noseband
CEDANT ARMA TOGÆ, let arms give place to the insignia of peace
CHAMBER OF DAIS, the best bedroom, kept for guests of consideration
CHANGE A LEG. In the old coaching days inside passengers changed legs with the consent of their opposite neighbour
CHANGE-HOUSE, an inn
CHAPPIN, a liquid measure 1 quart
CHAPPIT, struck (of a clock)
CHÂTEAU QUI PARLE, etc. (p. 187), when a fortress parleys and a lady listens, both are on the point of surrendering
CHAUMBER, a chamber
CHEEK OF THE CHIMNEY-NOOK, the fireside, chimney-corner
CHIELD, a fellow
CIRCUS OF ROME. *See* Green and blue chariots
CLAVERING, chattering, talkative
CLAVERS, idle talk, gossip
CLAVER'SE, John Grahame of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee
CLAW UP YOUR MITTENS, to hush you, give you the *coup de grâce*
CLUCKIN HEN, a sitting hen
COCKERNONY, a top-knot
COG, to empty or pour out
COGGING, quibbling, deceiving, cheating
COLDINGHAME ABBEY, or rather Priory, founded by King Edgar in the last years of the 11th century, a few miles from Eyemouth, on the coast of Berwickshire
COMMONTY, right of pasture on the commons
COMPT AND RECKONING, a Scots law process enforcing settlement of accounts
CONDICTIO INDEBITI, a claim for recovering a sum that has been paid when it was not due
CONSCRIPT FATHERS, the title given to the senators of ancient Rome
COOKIE, a Scotch bun
COPPER CAPTAIN, a counterfeit captain. *See* Beaumont and Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*
CORDERY, MR., a name suggested by Corderius, the teacher of Calvin, and author of a book of Latin dialogues once extensively used in schools
COUPE-GORGE, cut-throat
COUTEAU, a hunting knife
CRACKS, gossip, boasting
CRIMP, to kidnap
CRITIC, a play by Sheridan
CROOK, a chain for suspending a pot in old fireplaces
CROWDY, a thick pottage made of oatmeal
CUITLE, to diddle, get by cheating
CUL DE LAMPE, a pictorial ornament, tailpiece
CULLION, a poltroon
CUMBERNAULD, the seat of the ancient family of Fleming (Lord Elphinstone), situated 15 miles north-east Glasgow
CUMMER, a gossip or friend
CUTTY, short

DAFFING, frolicking, larking, fun
DAFT, crazy
DAIS. *See* Chamber of dais
DANDILLY, noted for beauty
DANG, drove, knocked
DEAD-DEAL, the board on which a dead body is stretched
DEBITUM FUNDI, a real burden on the estate
DECORE, to decorate, DECORNENTS, decorations
DEMELE, an encounter, altercation
DEMI-SAKER, a light field-piece, small cannon
DENTIER, more dainty
DEUT-LOAF, a sweet cake
DIGITO MONSTRARI, to be pointed at with the finger
DING, to knock, drive, beat
DINK, trim, neat
DIRGE, a funeral entertainment
DIRK, a dagger
DISNA, does not
DISPONE UPON, bestowed upon
DITTAY, an indictment, accusation
DOITED, dotard, stupid
DON GAYFEROS, a nephew of the chivalric Roland, and one of the Twelve Peers of Charlemagne
DONNART, stupid
DOO, a dove, pigeon
DOUR, stubborn
DRAP-DE-BERRY, a cloth made at Berri in France
DREIGH, slow, lingering
DRIBBLE, a drop
DROUTHY, dry
DRUCKEN, drunk
DRUMLANRIG, the ancient seat of the Queensberry family (now belongs to that of Buccleuch), on the Nith, parish of Durisdeer, Dumfriesshire
DUNDEE. John Grahame of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, a supporter of the Stuarts
DUNG, knocked, driven
DUNSH, to nudge
DWINING, declining, pining away

EARTH (of a badger), a hole
EAST LOTHIAN, another name for Haddingtonshire
EATCHE, adze
EBB, shallow
ECLAIRCISSEMENT, explanation
EE, an eye; EEN, eyes
EGERIA, the nymph who used to meet King Numa Pompilius in a grove near Rome
ELBO'-JIGGER, a fiddler
ELFLAND, fairyland
ENEUCH, enough
EXIES, hysterics
EXPIRY OF THE LEGAL, the expiration of the period in which an estate seized

by adjudication (*q. v.*) may be redeemed

EYAS, a hawk brought up from the nest

FACTOR, a steward
FAILZIE, to fail
FASH, to trouble
FEEBLESS, feeble, silly
FELL, terrible; a hide, skin
FEUAR, a Scotch lease-holder; FEU RIGHTS, absolute rights of property, in return for the payment of a trifling sum annually
FINCA ACKATES, faithful companion
FIT, the foot
FLAM, FLAN, OF FLAWN, a kind of custard
FLANKARD, the side of the lower part of the abdomen
FLIGHTERING, transient
FLISK, a caper, whim
FLORENTINE, a kind of pie
FLYTE, to scold, storm in anger
FOG, moss
FORBYE, besides
FORDUN, JOHN OF, an early Scottish chronicler of the 14th century
FORESPEAK, to bewitch, presage evil of
FORGATHER, to come together, meet one another
FOU, a bushel
FOUL THIEF, the devil
FOUND, to go, depend
FOY, an entertainment given by friends to one who is about to leave them for good
FRACTIOUS, rebellious, difficult to deal with
FREIT, an omen
FREMD, strange
FROGS, an ornamental fastening of a coat or mantle, generally a long button and a loop
FUGITATION, a criminal's fleeing from justice — a Scots law term
FURNISHES (DEER'S), presumably droppings; hence track

GABERLUNZIE, a beggar, mendicant
GAE, to go
GAISLING, a gosling
GALLOWAY, a Scotch cob, named from the district of Galloway where originally bred
GANG, to go; GANE, gone
GAR, to make, oblige
GATE, direction, place, way
GAUGER, an excisemen
GAUNCH, a snatch with the open mouth, bite
GAWSIE, plump, jolly
GEAR, property
GEIZENED, leaky, as a barrel kept too long dry
GEORGE[illegible], a gold Georgenoble ([illegible] 8d.), time of Henry VIII., St. George being the device on the obverse
GIF, if
GINES DE PASSAMONTE. *See Don Quixote*, pt. ii. chap. xxviii., and pt. i. chap. xxii.
GIRD, a hoop
GIRN, to grin
GLAZEN, furnished with glass
GLEEDING, looking askance
GLEED, a spark, flame
GLEEING, squinting
GLENT, to whisk, flash
GLOWER, to gaze, stare
GOB-BOX, the mouth
GOWD, gold
GOWK, a fool; a cuckoo
GOWRIE CONSPIRACY, a mysterious attempt to assassinate James VI. of Scotland by Lord Ruthven and his brother, the Earl of Gowrie, in 1600
GRAHAME TO WEAR GREEN. The Marquis of Montrose, a Grahame, was driven to execution in a cart of green alder; fulfilling an old prophecy — 'Visa la fin (Montrose's motto). On an outer calder tree green, Shall by many be seen'
GRAITH, furniture
GRAVAMINOUS, serious, important
GREEN AND BLUE CHARIOTS. In the reign of Justinian, emperor of the Eastern Empire, the rivalries of the blue and green charioteers, who raced in the circus at Byzantium, developed into political factions powerful enough to seriously disturb the state
GREET, to weep
GREYBEARD, a stone jar for holding ale or [illegible]
[illegible]AM, A COAT [illegible]
[illegible] MAIL, rent for the ground
GUDEMAN, the head of the house, the husband
GUDESIRE, a grandfather
GUDEWIFE, a wife, as head of her house, landlady
GUIDS, managers, guiders; GUIDING, treating, behaving to
GUSTING THEIR GAME, tickling their palates
GUY OF WARWICK, the hero of an Early English romance, one of whose feats was to overcome a famous Dun Cow on Dunsmore Heath, near Warwick

HACKSTOUN OF RATHILLET, a fanatical Cameronian, one of the murderers of Archbishop Sharp of St. Andrews in 1679
HAGGIS, a Scotch pudding of minced meat, mixed with oatmeal, suet, onions, etc., boiled in a skin bag
HAILL AND FEIR, whole and sound, complete and entire
HALE, HAILL, whole
HALF-FOU, half bushel
HAMILTON, on the Clyde, Lanarkshire, the principal seat of the ducal family of Hamilton. The wild cattle still roam through the extensive parks
HARLED, dragged
HATTED KIT, a bowl of sour or curdled cream
HAUD, to hold; HAUD OUT, to present a firearm
HEATHER COW, a twig or tuft of heath
HEEZY, a hoist, swing up
HEIR OF LINNE, this old ballad is printed in Percy's *Reliques*
HELLICAT, devil-may-care
HELL IS PAVED, etc., the phrase is due to Dr. Johnson: the idea is common to several writers; *cf.* George Herbert's *Jacula Prudentium*
HENRIETTA MARIA, queen-consort of Charles I., and daughter of Henry IV. of France
MIT SAGE OF J[illegible]NSON, v. Johnson's parody on a poem by T. Warton. *See* Boswell's *Life*, under year 1777
HOPE, BARD OF, Thomas Campbell, author of *Pleasures of Hope*
HOUGH, a thigh, ham
HOUSEWIFESKEP, housewifery
HOW, a hollow
HUMLOCK, a hemlock
HYKE A TALBOT, etc. (p. 30), hunting terms and names borrowed from Dame Juliana Berners's

Treatise of Hawking, Hunting, etc. (1486) — *Book of St. Alban's*

ILKA, each, every
ILKA LAND ITS AIN LAUCH, every place its own (law) customs
ILL-CLECKIT, ill-hatched
ILL-DEEDY GETT, mischievous urchin
IN FORO CONTENTIOSO, in the law courts
INGAN, an onion
INIMICUS AMICISSIMUS, an enemy is (sometimes) the best of friends
INLAKE, a breach, loss, death
INTER MINORES, between minors
IN TERROREM, as a warning to others
IRISH BRIGADE, a body of troops in the pay of the French King
ITHER, other

JACOBUS, a gold coin = 25s., first issued by James I. of England
JESS, a leathern strap fixed round a hawk's leg
JOE, a sweetheart, darling
JOHN CHURCHILL, the great soldier, the Duke of Marlborough of Anne's reign
JOHNNY NEW-COME, a newcomer, upstart
JOW, a toll

KAIL, broth; KAIL-YARD, a cabbage garden
KAIN, a tribute in kind, as of poultry, eggs, cheese, etc., from tenant to landlord
KAISER, the Emperor of Germany
KEBBUCK, a cheese
KEEKIT, peeped
KEEP HER THREEP, keep her resolution
KELPIE, a water-spirit
KEN, to know
KENSPECKLE, conspicuous, easily recognised
KIMMER, a gossip, friend
KINDLY AID, a contribution in kind payable to the landlord by the tenant
KIPPAGE, a rage, dilemma
KIPPER, a dried salmon
KIST, a chest, coffin
KITTLE, to tickle; ticklish
KNOWE, a knoll, eminence

LAMMER, amber
LAMMER LAW, one of the Lammermoor hills, 8 miles south of Haddington
L'AMPHITRION OÙ L'ON DÎNE, the man who really pays for the dinner. *See* Plautus, *Amphitruo*
LANDWARD, in the country, rural
LATE-WAKE, the watch over a dead body
LAUCH, law, customs
LAUNDER, to do laundry work
LAWING, a bill, reckoning
LAW'S SCHEME, a company formed in 1717 by John Law (of Lauriston, near Edinburgh) for developing the resources of Louisiana and the Mississippi valley, which at that time belonged to France
LEE, NATHANIEL, dramatist, went insane through drink, wrote *The Rival Queens; or, Alexander the Great* (1677), and other plays
LEG, CHANGE A. *See* Change a leg
LIFT, the sky; to carry off
LINKS, sandy flat ground on sea-coast, dunes
LIPPEN, to trust
LIPPENING WORD, occasional, thoughtless word
LITH, a joint
LOON, a fellow
LOOT, allowed, permitted
LOUPEN, leaped
LOWE, a flame, fire
LUCKIE, mother, a title given to old dames
LUITUR CUM PERSONA, etc. (p. 51), he pays with his person who cannot pay with his purse
LUM, a chimney
L'UM N'EMPÊCHE, etc. (p. 103, the one is no hindrance to the other
LUNGIES, loins
LURDANE, a blockhead

MAIL, tax, rent
MAILING, a small farm
MAIN, a hand at dice, match at cock-fighting
MAIR, MAIST, more, most
MAÎTRE D'ARMES, swordsman, fencing-master
MALLEUS MALIFICARUM (nine editions before 1496), by Krämer and Sprenger, describing the processes against witches
MANSE, a parsonage
MAUN, must
MAUT, malt
MEAL-POKE, a meal-bag
MELTER, a herring full of milt
MEPHIBOSHETH, a character in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*
MERK = 1s. 1½d.
MERSE, Berwickshire
MESSAN, a cur
METALL'D (LADS), mettled, full of spirit
MILE, SCOTTISH, nearly nine furlongs
MILL, or MULL, a snuff-box
MIRANDA, the heroine of Shakespeare's *Tempest*
MIRK, dark
MISGIE, to go wrong, fail
MITTENS. *See* Claw up your mittens
MON DIEU! IL Y EN A DEUX, Good Heavens! there are two of them
MONTERO CAP, a horseman's or huntsman's cap with ear-flaps
MORLAND, GEORGE, a clever English painter, but a man of dissipated habits, who died in 1804
MOSS, a morass, marsh
MOUNTAIN-MAN, a Cameronian, strictest sect of Covenanters
MR. PUFF, a character in Sheridan's *Critic*
MUCKLE, much
MULL, a snuff-horn
MULTIPLEPOINDING, a Scots law process, the English interpleader, for settling competing claims to one and the same fund
MURGEONS, mouths, grimaces

NAE, NAEBODY, NAETHING, no, nobody, nothing
NAR, never
NEQUE DIVES, NEQUE, etc. (p. 141), No Scotchman of merit, be he rich, brave, or even wise, will be able to remain long in his country. Envy will drive him out
NEUK, nook, corner
NOMBLES, or NUMBLES, the entrails of a deer
NORTHAMPTON, EARL OF Henry Howard, younger brother of Thomas, fourth Duke of Norfolk, died 1540, was prominent during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I
NORTH BERWICK LAW, a conical hill near North Berwick
NOURICE-SHIP, the office of nurse
NOWT, black cattle
NUMA, the second of the legendary kings of ancient Rome

NUPTA; DOMUM DUCTA; ORBIT; SEPULT.; wedded; taken home; died; buried

OFFCOME, an apology, excuse
ORANGE, PRINCE OF. *See* Spanish generals
OUT-BYE, from home
OVERCROW, to overpower, triumph over
OWERLOOK, to ignore
OXTER, the armpit

PACOLET, a dwarf, owner of a winged horse, in the legend of *Valentine and Orson*
PAINTING. *See* SERENE AND SILENT ART
PAND, a pledge; a bed-curtain
PAROCHINE, a parish
PARVE, NEC INVIDEO, etc. (p. 2), Thou art about to go, but alone, into the busy city, my little book—I grudge thee not thy lot
PAS D'AVANCE, the lead, precedence
PATRIA POTESTAS, paternal authority
PEARLINGS, lace
PEAT, a person of insufferable pride
PEGH, to pant, breathe hard
PETTICOAT-TAIL, a kind of cake baked with butter
PETTY COVER, for *petit couvert*, a meal not eaten in ceremonious state
PEW, the plaintive cry of certain birds; COULDNA HAE PLAYED PEW, could not have drawn a note from
PICKLE, a small quantity
PICK-MAW, a species of gull
PIG, a stoneware vessel, pitcher
PINE, to pain, punish
PINNYWINKLES, an instrument of torture consisting of a board with holes, into which the fingers were thrust and pressed with screw-pegs
PINT, SCOTCH = 3 English pints
PIQUE, REPIQUE, AND CAPOT, terms used in the game of piquet
PIRN, a reel
PIT-MIRK, as dark as pitch
PIZE, a term of mild execration
PLACEBO, a sop
PLACK, a small copper coin ⅓d penny
PLISKIE, a prank, trick
PLOY, a merry-making
PLUMDAMAS, for *prune de damas*, a damask plum, *i.e.* a damson (tart)
POCK-PUDDING, a Scotchman's contemptuous name for an Englishman
POINT, QUINT, AND QUATORZE, terms used in the game of picquet
POINT D'APPUI, a support
POINT D'ESPAGNE, a sort of French lace esteemed in Spain in the 17th century
POKE, a bag
POSSO, IN MANNOR WATER, in Peebleshire
POUTHERED, corned, slightly salted
PRESTER JOHN, legendary King of Abyssinia
PRETTY MAN, a brave man, athletic and skilled in the use of his weapons
PROFINE, a gift
PUND SCOTS = 1s. 8d. sterling
PYKE, pick

QUAICH, a drinking-cup of hooped staves, ornamented with silver. It held about a pint, and was chiefly used for wine and brandy
QUARTER'S LENGTH, a quarter of a yard
QUEAN, a sprightly young woman, flirt

RAE, a roe-deer
RAILLY, or RAIL, a kind of cloak or kerchief for the neck and head
RAVEN-BONE, the spoon-bone of the brisket, thrown by hunters to the ravens, in cutting up the stag
REAVING, thieving
REDD, to clear, tidy
RED WUD, downright mad
REEK, smoke
REESTED, smoke-dried
REMIGIUS, NICOLAUS, or NICHOLAS OF REMY, author of a work on witchcraft (1595)
REPONED, used as a reply
REVERENCE, BACON WITH, bacon with its garnishings or belongings
RIFLER, a hawk that does not return to the lure
RING-WALK, the track of a stag
ROAR YOU AN 'T WERE ANY NIGHTINGALE. See *Mid summer Night's Dream*, Act. i. Sc. 2
ROUND, to whisper
ROUP, an auction.
RUDAS, a scolding jade
RUNLET, a barrel, holding 18½ gallons

SAE, so
ST. CLAIR TO CROSS THE ORD ON A MONDAY. The Earl of Orkney, chief of the Sinclairs or St. Clairs, led his men on a Monday over Ord Hill on the way to Flodden, where they all perished to a man
SAINT GERMAINS, near Paris, where James II. held court during his exile
ST. MARGARET, niece of Edward the Confessor and wife of Malcolm Canmore; her day is June 10th
SAIR, sore
SAMYN, same
SANT, a saint
SARABAND, a Spanish dance
SARK, a shirt
SAUL, soul
SAI'MON, a salmon
SAUT, salt
SCART, a scratch
SCAUD, to scald
SCLATE, a slate; SCLATER, a slater
SCOTCH PINT = 3 English pints
SCOTTISH MILE, nearly nine furlongs
SCRAUGH, a screech, loud, discordant cry
SCREIGH, to shriek, scream
SCUNNER, to loathe, shudder with aversion
SERENE AND SILENT ART (painting). *See* Campbell's *Stanzas to Painting*
SETS, becomes, suits
SEVEN SLEEPERS, martyrs of Ephesus, who, according to the legend, slept in a cave from the reign of the Emperor Decius to that of Theodosius II., a period of 196 years
SEVEN WISE MASTERS, the seven sages of ancient Greece
SHAUGHLE, to wear down, shuffle
SHINS TO PINE (punish), *e. g.* the torture of the boot
SHOT OF, TO BE, to get quit of
SHOVEL-BOARD, a game in which the players strive to shove or drive coins or counters on to certain marks, lines, or squares on the table
SIC, SICCAN, such
SINGLES, the talons of a hawk
SIR EVAN DHU, Sir Evan Cameron of Lochiel, a famous Highland chief.

and supporter of the Stuart, fought at Killiecrankie in 1689

SIR JOSHUA, *i. e.* Sir Joshua Reynolds, the painter

SKIOCH DOCH NA SKIALL, cut a drink with a tale, *i.e.* Don't preach over your liquor

SKIRL, to scream

SLIDDERY, slippery

SLOKEN, to slake, quench

SNAP, a small gingerbread

SNECKDRAWING, cunning; SNECKDRAWER, an artful, cunning person

SNISHING, SNEESHIN, SNEESHING, snuff

SOOPIT, swept

SOOTHFAST, trusty, honest

SOPITE, to settle, set at rest

SORT, to supply, suit; to give a drubbing

SOUGH, a rumour, whisper; SOUGHED, softly breathed, whispered

SOUP, a sup; mouthful

SOUPLE, a cudgel

SOWENS, a kind of gruel made from the soured siftings of oatmeal

SPAE, to foretell

SPANISH GENERALS AND PRINCE OF ORANGE. William of Orange commanded 20,000 Spaniards in the campaign against France, 1554–57

SPEER, to ask, invite, inquire

SPRENGERUS. Jacob Sprenger, joint author of *Malleus Maleficarum*

SPULE-BANE, the shoulder-blade

SPUNK, a spark, match

SPURS, DISH OF. Scott's ancestress, the Flower of Yarrow, is said to have reminded her lord, Auld Wat of Harden, a celebrated Border raider, that the larder was empty, by placing on the table a dish containing a pair of clean spurs – a hint to ride into England. *See* Lockhart's *Life*, vol. i. p. 93

STEADING, a farm, farm-yard

STEER, to disturb

STICKIT, imperfect, broken down

STOUP, a liquid measure

STOUTHRIEF, robbery with violence

STRAE, straw

STRAUGHT, to stretch, make straight

STREIK, to stretch, lay out

SUB JOVE FRIGIDO, in the open air

SUBURB, outlying (district, place)

SUMPH, a blockhead, dunce

SUNE, soon

SURBATED, foot-sore

SUUM CUIQUE TRIBUITO, give to each his own

SWANKING, active, agile

SWAP, a barter, exchange; to strike soundly

SWAUK, a swack, thwack, violent blow

SWIRE, a mountain pass

SYBO, a young onion

SYCORAX, a witch, the mother of Caliban, in Shakespeare's *Tempest*

SYND, to rinse

SYNE, since, ago

TACK, a lease, possession

TAID, a toad

TAIT, a bunch, handful

TAKE ONE'S GAIT, to go one's own way

TAP OF TOW, bunch of tow on the distaff, that readily catches fire

TASS, a glass

TAURIDOR, a bull-fighter

TEIND, a tithe

TENONY, stringy, sinewy

TEUGH, tough

THICKSET, a kind of fustian, resembling velveteen in appearance

THOMAS THE RHYMER, of Ercildoune (Earlston) in Berwickshire, an ancient Scottish poet and prophet, and a favourite legendary hero

'THOU SWEETEST THING,' etc. (p. 191), from Joanna Baillie's *Constantine Paleologus*, Act ii Sc. 2

THOWLESS, inactive, remiss

THRAW, to twist itself, distort itself; a twist

THREEP, KEEP HER. *See* Keep her threep

THROUGH-STANE, THRUCH-STANE, a flat gravestone

TIMMER, timber; TIMMER BURSE, the exchange of the timber-merchants

TIPPENCE, twopence

TOCHER-GOOD, dowry

TOD, a fox

TOD'S DEN, also called in other passages Tod's Hole, and stated to be 5 to 6 miles from Wolf's Crag[1]

TOKAY, a fiery Hungarian wine

TOLBOOTH, a gaol

TONGUE OF THE TRUMP, the part of a jew's-harp that makes the sound; hence the essential or principal person concerned

TOUT, the pet; a fit of ill-temper

TRAPRAIN, OT TRAPRAIN LAW, a conspicuous conical hill 4 miles east of Haddington

TREDRILLE, a game of cards played by three persons

TRISTREM, SIR, a knight of the Round Table, famous in the chase

TWA, two

TWAL, twelve; TWAL PENNIES SCOTCH = one penny of English money

TWILT, a quilted bed-cover

UMQUHILE, deceased, late

UNA, the heroine of Spenser's *Faërie Queene*

UNCO, uncommon

VAIK, to be vacant

VERSAILLES, the court of Louis XIV. of France

VIA FACTI, by force

VIRGINALS, an old sort of piano

VISIE, an inspection

VISNOMY, physiognomy, face, features

VIVERS, victuals

WADSET, a mortgage, pledge, WADSETTER, a usurer, mortgager

WAE, woe; woeful, sorry

WAME, belly

WAP, a smart stroke

WARE, to spend, bestow

WARLOCK, a witch

WASTLAND, west country

WAT, to wet

WATER-PURPIE, the brook lime or horsewell grass

WAUR, worse

WEAN an infant, small child

WEID, a feverish cold

WHAMPLE, a blow

WHEEN, a few

WHIGMALEERIES, fancy toys

WHILES, now and again

WHIM-WHAM, fancy pastry

WHIN-BUSH, a furze bush

WHINSTANE, greenstone, ragstone

WHITE-HASS, a meat pudding

[1] A few other irregularities of a similar kind occur in this novel: as Lady Ashton is called Margaret and Eleanor; Girder, John and Gibbon, the sexton. Mortsbeugh and Mortheugh.

WHOMLING, turning upside down
WILL A WINS, woe's me, well-a-day
WILL TO CUPAR MAUN TO CUPAR, a wilful man must have his way
WIN, to make way, get
WIND HIM A FIRN, to cause him trouble, annoyance
WITHIE, the gallows, a halter
WON INTO, made way into
WOODIE, the gallows
WUD, mad
WYTE, blame, responsibility

YESTREEN, yesternight
YILL, ale
YOWL, to yell, give tongue

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THE

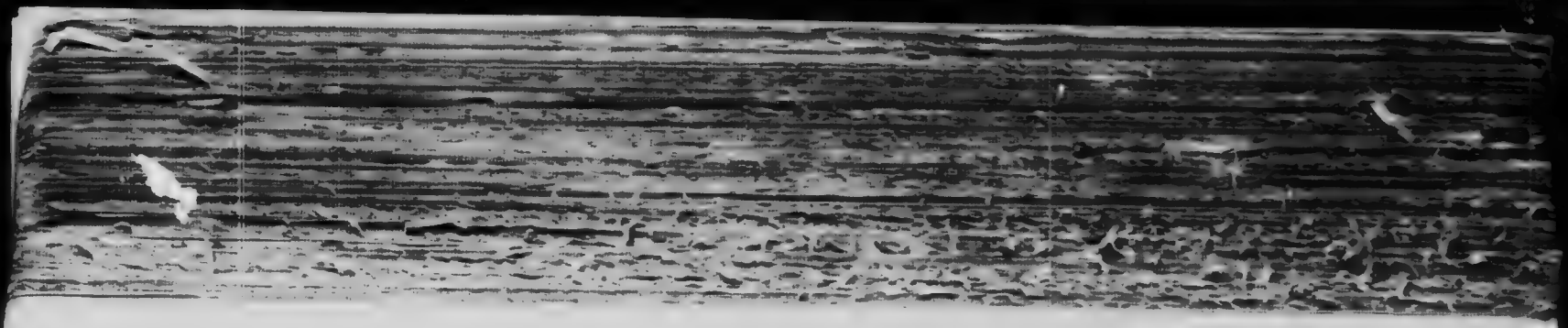
WAVERLEY NOVELS

OF

SIR WALTER SCOTT

VOLUME XXIV

COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS



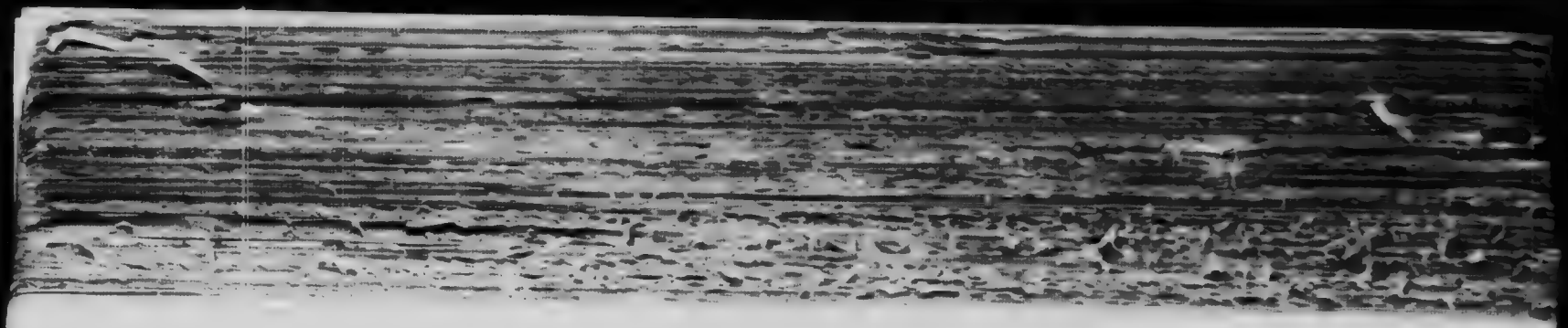
TALES OF MY LANDLORD

Fourth and Last Series

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM

SCHOOLMASTER AND PARISH-CLERK OF GANDERCLEUGH



INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM, M.A.,

TO THE LOVING READER WISHETH HEALTH AND PROSPERITY

IT would ill become me, whose name has been spread abroad by those former collections, bearing this title of *Tales of my Landlord*, and who have, by the candid voice of a numerous crowd of readers, been taught to think that I merit not the empty fame alone, but also the more substantial rewards, of successful pencraft — it would, I say, ill become me to suffer this, my youngest literary babe, and probably at the same time the last child of mine old age, to pass into the world without some such modest apology for its defects as it has been my custom to put forth on preceding occasions of the like nature. The world has been sufficiently instructed, of a truth, that I am not individually the person to whom is to be ascribed the actual inventing or designing of the scheme upon which these Tales, which men have found so pleasing, were originally constructed; as also that neither am I the actual workman who, furnished by a skilful architect with an accurate plan, including elevations and directions both general and particular, has from thence toiled to bring forth and complete the intended shape and proportion of each division of the edifice. Nevertheless, I have been indisputably the man who, in placing my name at the head of the undertaking, have rendered myself mainly and principally responsible for its general success. When a ship of war goeth forth to battle with her crew, consisting of sundry foremast-men and various officers, such subordinate persons are not said to gain or lose the vessel which they have manned or attacked, although each was natheless sufficiently active in his own department; but it is forthwith bruited and noised abroad, without further phrase, that Captain Jedediah

Cleishbotham hath lost such a seventy four, or won that which, by the united exertions of all thereto pertaining, is taken from the enemy. In the same manner, shame and sorrow it were if I, the voluntary captain and founder of these adventures, after having upon three divers occasions assumed to myself the emoluments and reputation thereof, should now withdraw myself from the risks of failure proper to this fourth and last outgoing. No! I will rather address my associates in this bottom with the constant spirit of Matthew Prior's heroine:

> Did I but purpose to embark with thee
> On the smooth surface of some summer sea,
> But would forsake the waves, and make the shore,
> When the winds whistle, and the billows roar!

As little, nevertheless, would it become my years and station not to admit without cavil certain errors which may justly be pointed out in these concluding *Tales of my Landlord* the last, and, it is manifest, never carefully revised or corrected, handiwork of Mr. Peter Pattieson, now no more; the same worthy young man so repeatedly mentioned in these Introductory Essays, and never without that tribute to his good sense and talents, nay, even genius, which his contributions to this my undertaking fairly entitled him to claim at the hands of his surviving friend and patron. These pages, I have said, were the *ultimus labor* of mine ingenious assistant: but I say not, as the great Dr. Pitcairne of his hero *ultimus atque optimus*. Alas! even the giddiness attendant on a journey on this Manchester railroad is not so perilous to the nerves as that too frequent exercise in the merry-go-round of the ideal world, whereof the tendency to pervert the fancy confused and the judgment inert hath in all ages been noted, not only by the erudite of the earth, but even by many of the thick witted Ofelli themselves; whether the rapid pace at which the fancy moveth in such exercitations, where the wish of the penman is to him like Prince Houssain's tapestry, in the Eastern fable, be the chief source of peril, or whether, without reference to this wearing speed of movement, the dwelling habitually in those realms of imagination be as little suited for a man's intellect as to breathe for any considerable space 'the difficult air of the mountain top' is to the physical structure of his outward frame, this question belongeth not to me; but certain it is, that we often discover in the works of the foremost of this order of men marks of bewilderment and confusion, such as do

not so frequently occur in those of persons to whom nature hath conced[ed] fancy weaker of wing or less ambitious in flight.

It [is] affecting to see the great Miguel Cervantes himself, even [as] the sons of meaner men, defending himself against the critics of the day, who assailed him upon such little discrepancies and inaccuracies as are apt to cloud the progress even of a mind like his, when the evening is closing around it.

'It is quite a common thing,' says Don Quixote, 'for men who have gained a very great reputation by their writings before they were printed quite to lose it afterwards, or, at least, the greater part.' 'The reason is plain,' answers the Bachelor Carrasco; 'their faults are more easily discovered after the books are printed, as being then more read, and more narrowly examined, especially if the author has been much cried up before, for then the severity of the scrutiny is sure to be the greater. Those who have raised themselves a name by their own ingenuity, great poets and celebrated historians, are commonly, if not always, envied by a set of men who delight in censuring the writings of others, though they could never produce any of their own.' 'That is no wonder,' quoth Don Quixote; 'there are many divines that would make but very dull preachers, and yet are quick enough at finding faults and superfluities in other men's sermons.' 'All this is true,' says Carrasco, 'and therefore I could wish such censurers would be more merciful and less scrupulous, and not dwell ungenerously upon small spots that are in a manner but so many atoms on the face of the clear sun they murmur at. If *aliquando dormitat Homerus*, let them consider how many nights he kept himself awake to bring his noble works to light as little darkened with defects as might be. But, indeed, it may many times happen that what is censured for a fault is rather an ornament, as moles often add to the beauty of a face. When all is said, he that publishes a book runs a great risk, since nothing can be so unlikely as that he should have composed one capable of securing the approbation of every reader.' 'Sure,' says Don Quixote, 'that which treats of me can have pleased but few!' 'Quite the contrary,' says Carrasco; 'for as *infinitus est numerus stultorum*, so an infinite number have admired your history. Only some there are who have taxed the author with want of memory or sincerity, because he forgot to give an account who it was that stole Sancho's Dapple, for that particular is not mentioned there, only we find, by the story, that it was stolen; and yet, by and by, we find him riding the same ass again, without any previous light given us into the matter. Then they say tho' the author forgot to tell the reader what Sancho did with the hundred [duca]tes of gold he found in the portmanteau in the Sierra Morena, for there is not a word said of them more; and many people have a great mind to know what he did with them, and how he spent them; which is one of the most material points in which the work is defective' [Part II. chap. iii.].

How amusingly Sancho is made to clear up the obscurities thus alluded to by the Bachelor Carrasco no reader can have forgotten; but there remained enough of similar *lacunæ*, inadvertencies, and mistakes to exercise the ingenuity of those Spanish critics who were too wise in their own conceit to profit

by the good-natured and modest apology of this immortal author.

There can be no doubt that, if Cervantes had deigned to use it, he might have pleaded also the apology of indifferent health, under which he certainly laboured while finishing the second part of *Don Quixote*. It must be too obvious that the intervals of such a malady as then affected Cervantes could not be the most favourable in the world for revising lighter compositions, and correcting, at least, those grosser errors and imperfections which each author should, if it were but for shame's sake, remove from his work, before bringing it forth into the broad light of day, where they will never fail to be distinctly seen, nor lack ingenious persons who will be too happy in discharging the office of pointing them out.

It is more than time to explain with what purpose we have called thus fully to memory the many venial errors of the inimitable Cervantes, and those passages in which he has rather defied his adversaries than pleaded his own justification; for I suppose it will be readily granted that the difference is too wide betwixt that great wit of Spain and ourselves to permit us to use a buckler which was rendered sufficiently formidable only by the strenuous hand in which it was placed.

The history of my first publications is sufficiently well known. Nor did I relinquish the purpose of concluding these *Tales of my Landlord*, which had been so remarkably fortunate; but death, which steals upon us all with an inaudible foot, cut short the ingenious young man to whose memory I composed that inscription, and erected, at my own charge, that monument which protects his remains, by the side of the river Gander, which he has contributed so much to render immortal, and in a place of his own selection, not very distant from the school under my care.[1] In a word, the ingenious Mr. Pattieson was removed from his place.

Nor did I confine my care to his posthumous fame alone, but carefully inventoried and preserved the effects which he left behind him, namely, the contents of his small wardrobe, and a number of printed books of somewhat more consequence, together with certain woefully blurred manuscripts discovered in his repository. On looking these over, I found them to contain two tales called *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*; but was seriously disappointed to perceive that they were by no means in that state of correctness which would induce

[1] See *Old Mortality*, vol. vi. p. 2, for some circumstances attending this erection.

an experienced person to pronounce any writing, in the technical language of bookcraft, 'prepared for press.' There were not only *hiatus valde deflendi*, but even grievous inconsistencies, and other mistakes, which the penman's leisurely revision, had he been spared to bestow it, would doubtless have cleared away. After a considerate perusal, I no question flattered myself that these manuscripts, with all their faults, contained here and there passages which seemed plainly to intimate that severe indisposition had been unable to extinguish altogether the brilliancy of that fancy which the world had been pleased to acknowledge in the creations of *Old Mortality*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and others of these narratives. But I, nevertheless, threw the manuscripts into my drawer, resolving not to think of committing them to the Ballantynian ordeal until I could either obtain the assistance of some capable person to supply deficiencies and correct errors, so as they might face the public with credit, or perhaps numerous and more serious avocations might permit me to dedicate my own time and labour to that task.

While I was in this uncertainty, I had a visit from a stranger, who was announced as a young gentleman desirous of speaking with me on particular business. I immediately augured the accession of a new boarder, but was at once checked by observing that the outward man of the stranger was, in a most remarkable degree, what mine host of the Sir William Wallace, in his phraseology, calls 'seedy.' His black coat had seen service; the waistcoat of grey plaid bore yet stronger marks of having encountered more than one campaign; his third piece of dress was an absolute veteran compared to the others; his shoes were so loaded with mud as showed his journey must have been pedestrian; and a grey 'maud,' which fluttered around his wasted limbs, completed such an equipment as, since Juvenal's days, has been the livery of the poor scholar. I therefore concluded that I beheld a candidate for the vacant office of usher, and prepared to listen to his proposals with the dignity becoming my station; but what was my surprise when I found I had before me, in this rusty student, no less a man than Paul, the brother of Peter Pattieson, come to gather in his brother's succession, and possessed, it seemed, with no small idea of the value of that part of it which consisted in the productions of his pen.

By the rapid study I made of him, this Paul was a sharp lad, imbued with some tincture of letters, like his regretted

brother, but totally destitute of those amiable qualities which had often induced me to say within myself that Peter was, like the famous John Gay —

In wit a man, simplicity a child.

He set little by the legacy of my deceased assistant's wardrobe, nor did the books hold much greater value in his eyes; but he peremptorily demanded to be put in possession of the manuscripts, alleging, with obstinacy, that no definite bargain had been completed between his late brother and me, and at length produced the opinion to that effect of a writer, or man of business — a class of persons with whom I have always chosen to have as little concern as possible.

But I had one defence left, which came to my aid, *tanquam deus ex machinâ*. This rapacious Paul Pattieson could not pretend to wrest the disputed manuscripts out of my possession, unless upon repayment of a considerable sum of money, which I had advanced from time to time to the deceased Peter, and particularly to purchase a small annuity for his aged mother. These advances, with the charges of the funeral and other expenses, amounted to a considerable sum, which the poverty-struck student and his acute legal adviser equally foresaw great difficulty in liquidating. The said Mr. Paul Pattieson, therefore, listened to a suggestion, which I dropped as if by accident, that, if he thought himself capable of filling his brother's place of carrying the work through the press, I would make him welcome to bed and board within my mansion while he was thus engaged, only requiring his occasional assistance at hearing the more advanced scholars. This seemed to promise a close of our dispute alike satisfactory to all parties, and the first act of Paul was to draw on me for a round sum, under pretence that his wardrobe must be wholly refitted. To this I made no objection, though it certainly showed like vanity to purchase garments in the extremity of the mode, when not only great part of the defunct's habiliments were very fit for a twelve-month's use, but, as I myself had been, but yesterday as it were, equipped in a becoming new stand of black clothes, Mr. Pattieson would have been welcome to the use of such of my quondam raiment as he thought suitable, as indeed had always been the case with his deceased brother.

The school, I must needs say, came tolerably on. My youngster was very smart, and seemed to be so active in his duty of usher, if I may so speak, that he even overdid his

part therein, and I began to feel myself a cipher in my own school.

I comforted myself with the belief that the publication was advancing as fast as I could desire. On this subject Paul Pattieson, like ancient Pistol, 'talked bold words at the bridge,' and that not only at our house, but in the society of our neighbours, amongst whom, instead of imitating the retired and monastic manner of his brother deceased, he became a gay visitor, and such a reveller, that in process of time he was observed to vilipend the modest fare which had at first been esteemed a banquet by his hungry appetite, and thereby highly displeased my wife, who, with justice, applauds herself for the plentiful, cleanly, and healthy victuals wherewith she maintains her ushers and boarders.

Upon the whole, I rather hoped than entertained a sincere confidence that all was going on well, and was in that unpleasant state of mind which precedes the open breach between two associates who have been long jealous of each other, but are as yet deterred by a sense of mutual interest from coming to an open rupture.

The first thing which alarmed me was a rumour in the village that Paul Pattieson intended, in some little space, to undertake a voyage to the Continent — on account of his health, as was pretended, but, as the same report averred, much more with the view of gratifying the curiosity which his perusal of the classics had impressed upon him than for any other purpose. I was, I say, rather alarmed at this *susurrus*, and began to reflect that the retirement of Mr. Pattieson, unless his loss could be supplied in good time, was like to be a blow to the establishment; for, in truth, this Paul had a winning way with the boys, especially those who were gentle-tempered: so that I must confess my doubts whether, in certain respects, I myself could have fully supplied his place in the school, with all my authority and experience. My wife, jealous, as became her station, of Mr. Pattieson's intentions, advised me to take the matter up immediately, and go to the bottom at once; and, indeed, I had always found that way answered best with my boys.

Mrs. Cleishbotham was not long before renewing the subject; for, like most of the race of Xantippe, though my helpmate is a well-spoken woman, she loves to thrust in her oar where she is not able to pull it to purpose. 'You are a sharp-witted man, Mr. Cleishbotham,' would she observe, 'and

a learned man, Mr. Cleishbotham, and the schoolmaster of Gandercleuch, Mr. Cleishbotham, which is saying all in one word; but many a man almost as great as yourself has lost the saddle by suffering an inferior to get up behind him; and though with the world, Mr. Cleishbotham, you have the name of doing everything, both in directing the school and in this new profitable book line which you have taken up, yet it begins to be the common talk of Gandercleuch, both up the water and down the water, that the usher both writes the dominie's books and teaches the dominie's school. Ay — ay, ask maid, wife, or widow, and she 'll tell ye the least gaitling among them all comes to Paul Pattieson with his lesson as naturally as they come to me for their four hours, puir things; and never ane thinks of applying to you aboot a kittle turn, or a crabbed word, or about onything else, unless it were for *licet exire*, or the mending of an auld pen.'

Now, this address assailed me on a summer evening, when I was whiling away my leisure hours with the end of a cutty-pipe, and indulging in such bland imaginations as the nicotian weed is wont to produce, more especially in the case of studious persons, devoted *musis severioribus*. I was naturally loth to leave my misty sanctuary; and endeavoured to silence the clamour of Mrs. Cleishbotham's tongue, which has something in it peculiarly shrill and penetrating. 'Woman,' said I, with a tone of domestic authority befitting the occasion, '*res tuas agas* — mind your washings and your wringings, your stuffings and your physicking, or whatever concerns the outward person of the pupils, and leave the progress of their education to my usher, Paul Pattieson, and myself.'

'I am glad to see,' added the accursed woman (that I should say so!), 'that ye have the grace to name him foremost, for there is little doubt that he ranks first of the troop, if ye wad but hear what the neighbours speak — or whisper.'

'What do they whisper, thou sworn sister of the Eumenides?' cried I, the irritating *œstrum* of the woman's objurgation totally counterbalancing the sedative effects both of pipe and pot.

'Whisper!' resumed she in her shrillest note. 'Why, they whisper loud enough for me, at least, to hear them, that the schoolmaster of Gandercleuch is turned a doited auld woman, and spends all his time in tippling strong drink with the keeper of the public-house, and leaves school and book-making, and a' the rest o't, to the care of his usher; and, also, the wives in Gandercleuch say, that you have engaged Paul Pattieson to

write a new book, which is to beat a' the lave that gaed afore it; and, to show what a sair lift you have o' the job, you didna sae muckle as ken the name o't — no, nor whether it was to be about some heathen Greek or the Black Douglas.'

This was said with such bitterness that it penetrated to the very quick, and I hurled the poor old pipe, like one of Homer's spears, not in the face of my provoking helpmate, though the temptation was strong, but into the river Gander, which, as is now well known to tourists from the uttermost parts of the earth, pursues its quiet meanders beneath the bank on which the schoolhouse is pleasantly situated; and, starting up, fixed on my head the cocked hat (the pride of Messrs. Grieve and Scott's[1] repository), and, plunging into the valley of the brook, pursued my way upwards, the voice of Mrs. Cleishbotham accompanying me in my retreat with something like the angry scream of triumph with which the brood-goose pursues the flight of some unmannerly cur or idle boy who has intruded upon her premises, and fled before her. Indeed, so great was the influence of this clamour of scorn and wrath which hung upon my rear, that, while it rung in my ears, I was so moved that I instinctively tucked the skirts of my black coat under my arm, as if I had been in actual danger of being seized on by the grasp of the pursuing enemy. Nor was it till I had almost reached the well-known burial-place, in which it was Peter Pattieson's hap to meet the far-famed personage called Old Mortality, that I made a halt for the purpose of composing my perturbed spirits, and considering what was to be done; for as yet my mind was agitated by a chaos of passions, of which anger was predominant; and for what reason, or against whom, I entertained such tumultuous displeasure, it was not easy for me to determine.

Nevertheless, having settled my cocked hat with becoming accuracy on my well-powdered wig, and suffered it to remain uplifted for a moment to cool my flushed brow, having, moreover, readjusted and shaken to rights the skirts of my black coat, I came into case to answer to my own questions, which, till these manœuvres had been sedately accomplished, I might have asked myself in vain.

In the first place, therefore, to use the phrase of Mr. Docket, the writer (that is, the attorney) of our village of Gandercleuch, I became satisfied that my anger was directed against all and sundry, or, in law Latin, *contra omnes mortales*, and more

[1] A well-known firm of hatters in Edinburgh (*Laing*).

particularly against the neighbourhood of Gandercleuch, for circulating reports to the prejudice of my literary talents, as well as my accomplishments as a pedagogue, and transferring the fame thereof to mine own usher. Secondly, against my spouse, Dorothea Cleishbotham, for transferring the said calumnious reports to my ears in a prerupt and unseemly manner, and without due respect either to the language which she made use of or the person to whom she spoke, treating affairs in which I was so intimately concerned as if they were proper subjects for jest among gossips at a christening, where the womankind claim the privilege of worshipping the *Bona Dea* according to their secret female rites. Thirdly, I became clear that I was entitled to respond to any whom it concerned to inquire, that my wrath was kindled against Paul Pattieson, my usher, for giving occasion both for the neighbours of Gandercleuch entertaining such opinions and for Mrs. Cleishbotham disrespectfully urging them to my face, since neither circumstance could have existed without he had put forth sinful misrepresentations of transactions private and confidential, and of which I had myself entirely refrained from dropping any the least hint to any third person.

This arrangement of my ideas having contributed to soothe the stormy atmosphere of which they had been the offspring gave reason a time to predominate, and to ask me, with her calm but clear voice, whether, under all the circumstances, I did well to nourish so indiscriminate an indignation? In fine, on closer examination, the various splenetic thoughts I had been indulging against other parties began to be merged in that resentment against my perfidious usher which, like the serpent of Moses, swallowed up all subordinate objects of displeasure. To put myself at open feud with the whole of my neighbours, unless I had been certain of some effectual mode of avenging myself upon them, would have been an undertaking too weighty for my means, and not unlikely, if rashly grappled withal, to end in my ruin. To make a public quarrel with my wife, on such an account as her opinion of my literary accomplishments, would sound ridiculous; and, besides, Mrs. C. was sure to have all the women on her side, who would represent her as a wife persecuted by her husband for offering him good advice, and urging it upon him with only too enthusiastic sincerity.

There remained Paul Pattieson, undoubtedly, the most natural and proper object of my indignation, since I might

be said to have him in my own power, and might punish him by dismissal, at my pleasure. Yet even vindictive proceedings against the said Paul, however easy to be enforced, might be productive of serious consequences to my own purse; and I began to reflect, with anxiety, that in this world it is not often that the gratification of our angry passions lies in the same road with the advancement of our interest, and that the wise man, the *vere sapiens*, seldom hesitates which of these two he ought to prefer.

I recollected also that I was quite uncertain how far the present usher had really been guilty of the foul acts of assumption charged against him.

In a word, I began to perceive that it would be no light matter, at once, and without maturer perpending of sundry collateral *punctiuncula*, to break up a joint-stock adventure, or society, as civilians term it, which, if profitable to him, had at least promised to be no less so to me, established in years and learning and reputation so much his superior. Moved by which, and other the like considerations, I resolved to proceed with becoming caution on the occasion, and not, by stating my causes of complaint too hastily in the outset, exasperate into a positive breach what might only prove some small misunderstanding, easily explained or apologised for, and which, like a leak in a new vessel, being once discovered and carefully stopped, renders the vessel but more seaworthy than it was before.

About the time that I had adopted this healing resolution, I reached the spot where the almost perpendicular face of a steep hill seems to terminate the valley, or at least divides it into two dells, each serving as a cradle to its own mountain-stream, the Gruffquack, namely, and the shallower but more noisy Gusedub, on the left hand, which, at their union, form the Gander, properly so called. Each of these little valleys has a walk winding up to its recesses, rendered more easy by the labours of the poor during the late hard season, and one of which bears the name of Pattieson's Path, while the other had been kindly consecrated to my own memory by the title of the Dominie's Daidling-bit. Here I made certain to meet my associate, Paul Pattieson, for by one or other of these roads he was wont to return to my house of an evening, after his lengthened rambles.

Nor was it long before I espied him descending the Gusedub by that tortuous path, marking so strongly the character of a

Scottish glen. He was easily distinguished, indeed, at some distance, by his jaunty swagger, in which he presented to you the flat of his leg, like the manly knave of clubs, apparently with the most perfect contentment, not only with his leg and boot, but with every part of his outward man, and the whole fashion of his garments, and, one would almost have thought, the contents of his pockets.

In this, his wonted guise, he approached me, where I was seated near the meeting of the waters, and I could not but discern that his first impulse was to pass me without any prolonged or formal greeting. But, as that would not have been decent, considering the terms on which we stood, he seemed to adopt, on reflection, a course directly opposite; bustled up to me with an air of alacrity, and, I may add, impudence; and hastened at once into the middle of the important affairs which it had been my purpose to bring under discussion in a manner more becoming their gravity. 'I am glad to see you, Mr. Cleishbotham,' said he, with an inimitable mixture of confusion and effrontery; 'the most wonderful news which has been heard in the literary world in my time — all Gandercleuch rings with it: they positively speak of nothing else, from Miss Buskbody's youngest apprentice to the minister himself, and ask each other in amazement whether the tidings are true or false — to be sure they are of an astounding complexion, especially to you and me.'

'Mr. Pattieson,' said I, 'I am quite at a loss to guess at your meaning. *Davus sum, non Œdipus* — I am Jedediah Cleishbotham, schoolmaster of the parish of Gandercleuch, no conjurer, and neither reader of riddles nor expounder of enigmata.'

'Well,' replied Paul Pattieson, 'Mr. Jedediah Cleishbotham, schoolmaster of the parish of Gandercleuch, and so forth, all I have to inform you is, that our hopeful scheme is entirely blown up. The tales, on publishing which we reckoned with so much confidence, have already been printed: they are abroad, over all America, and the British papers are clamorous.'

I received this news with the same equanimity with which I should have accepted a blow addressed to my stomach by a modern gladiator, with the full energy of his fist. 'If this be correct information, Mr. Pattieson,' said I, 'I must of necessity suspect you to be the person who have supplied the foreign press with the copy which the printers have thus made an unscrupulous use of, without respect to the rights of the undeniable proprietors of the manuscripts; and I request to

know whether this American production embraces the alterations which you as well as I judged necessary, before the work could be fitted to meet the public eye?'

To this my gentleman saw it necessary to make a direct answer, for my manner was impressive and my tone decisive. His native audacity enabled him, however, to keep his ground, and he answered with firmness —

'Mr. Cleishbotham, in the first place, these manuscripts, over which you claim a very doubtful right, were never given to any one by me, and must have been sent to America either by yourself or by some one of the various gentlemen to whom, I am well aware, you have afforded opportunities of perusing my brother's MS. remains.'

'Mr. Pattieson,' I replied, 'I beg to remind you that it never could be my intention, either by my own hands or through those of another, to remit these manuscripts to the press until, by the alterations which I meditated, and which you yourself engaged to make, they were rendered fit for public perusal.'

Mr. Pattieson answered me with much heat — 'Sir, I would have you to know that, if I accepted your paltry offer, it was with less regard to its amount than to the honour and literary fame of my late brother. I foresaw that if I declined it you would not hesitate to throw the task into incapable hands, or, perhaps, have taken it upon yourself, the most unfit of all men to tamper with the works of departed genius, and that, God willing, I was determined to prevent; but the justice of Heaven has taken the matter into its own hands. Peter Pattieson's last labours shall now go down to posterity unscathed by the scalping-knife of alteration in the hands of a false friend — shame on the thought that the unnatural weapon could ever be wielded by the hand of a brother!'

I heard this speech not without a species of vertigo or dizziness in my head, which would probably have struck me lifeless at his feet, had not a thought like that of the old ballad —

Earl Percy sees my fall,

called to my recollection, that I should only afford an additional triumph by giving way to my feelings in the presence of Mr. Paul Pattieson, who, I could not doubt, must be more or less directly at the bottom of the Transatlantic publication, and had in one way or another found his own interest in that nefarious transaction.

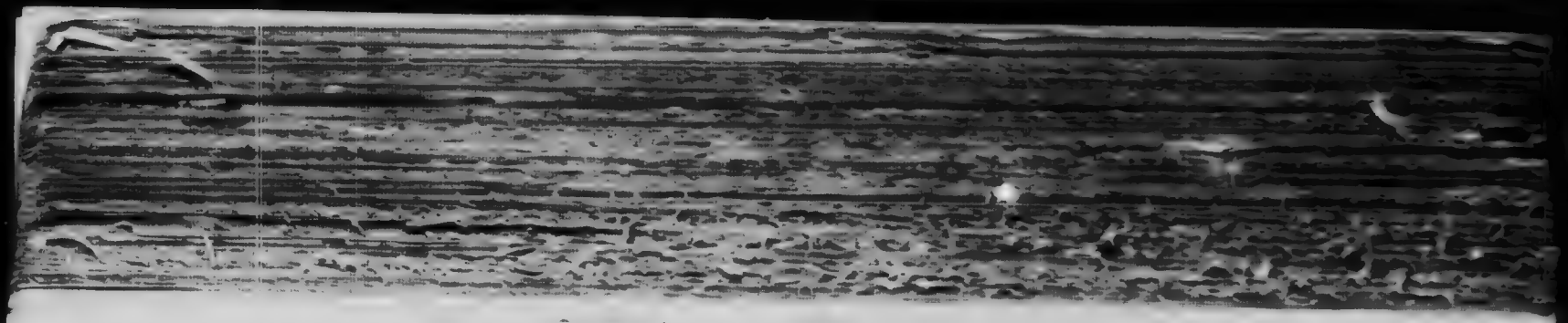
To get quit of his odious presence, I bid him an uncere monious good-night, and marched down the glen with the air not of one who has parted with a friend, but who rather has shaken off an intrusive companion. On the road I pondered the whole matter over with an anxiety which did not in the smallest degree tend to relieve me. Had I felt adequate to the exertion, I might, of course, have supplanted this spurious edition (of which the literary gazettes are already doling out copious specimens) by introducing into a copy, to be instantly published at Edinburgh, adequate correction of the various in consistencies and imperfections which have already been alluded to. I remember the easy victory of the real second part of these *Tales of my Landlord* over the performance sent forth by an interloper under the same title, and why should not the same triumph be repeated now? There would, in short, have been a pride of talent in this manner of avenging myself, which would have been justifiable in the case of an injured man; but the state of my health has for some time been such as to render any attempt of this nature in every way imprudent.

Under such circumstances, the last 'Remains' of Peter Pattieson must even be accepted as they were left in his desk: and I humbly retire in the hope that, such as they are, they may receive the indulgence of those who have ever been but too merciful to the productions of his pen, and in all respects to the courteous reader's obliged servant,

J. C.

GANDERCLEUCH, 15*th Oct.* 1831.

COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS



PREFACE

SIR WALTER SCOTT transmitted from Naples, in February 1832, an Introduction for *Castle Dangerous*; but if he ever wrote one for a second edition of *Count Robert of Paris*, it has not been discovered among his papers.

Some notes, chiefly extracts from the books which he had been observed to consult while *dictating* this novel, are now appended to its pages; and in addition to what the Author had given in the shape of historical information respecting the principal real persons introduced, the reader is here presented with what may probably amuse him, the passage of *The Alexiad* in which Anna Comnena describes the incident which originally, no doubt, determined Sir Walter's choice of a hero.

May, A. D. 1097. — As for the multitude of those who advanced towards THE GREAT CITY, let it be enough to say that they were as the stars in the heaven, or as the sand upon the sea-shore. They were, in the words of Homer, as many as the leaves and flowers of spring. But for the names of the leaders, though they are present in my memory, I will not relate them. The numbers of these would alone deter me, even if my language furnished the means of expressing their barbarous sounds; and for what purpose should I afflict my readers with a long enumeration of the names of those whose visible presence gave so much horror to all that beheld them? As soon, therefore, as they approached the Great City, they occupied the station appointed for them by the Emperor, near to the monastery of Cosmidius. But this multitude were not, like the Hellenic one of old, to be restrained and governed by the loud voices of nine heralds: they required the constant superintendence of chosen and valiant soldiers to keep them from violating the commands of the Emperor.

He, meantime, laboured to obtain from the other leaders that acknowledgment of his supreme authority which had already been drawn from Godfrey [Γοντοφρέ] himself. But, notwithstanding the willingness of some to accede to this proposal, and their assistance in working on the minds of their associates, the Emperor's endeavours had little success, as the majority were looking for the arrival of Bohemund [Βαιμούντος], in whom they placed their chief confidence, and resorted to every art with the view of gaining time. The Emperor, whom it was not easy to deceive, pene-

trated their motives; and by granting to one powerful person demands which had been supposed out of all bounds of expectation, and by resorting to a variety of other devices, he at length prevailed, and won general assent to the following of the example of Godfrey, who also was sent for in person to assist in this business.

All, therefore, being assembled, and Godfrey among them, the oath was taken; but when all was finished, a certain noble among these counts had the audacity to seat himself on the throne of the Emperor. [Τολμηρός τις εὐγενὴς εἰς τὸν σκίμποδα τοῦ Βασιλέως ἐκάθισεν.] The Emperor restrained himself and said nothing, for he was well acquainted of old with the nature of the Latins. But the Count Baldwin [Βαλδουΐνος], stepping forth and seizing him by the hand, dragged him thence, and with many reproaches said, 'It becomes thee not to do such things here, especially after having taken the oath of fealty [τοιοῦτον . . . ποιῆσαι δουλείαν τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ ταῦτα ὑποσχομένῳ]. It is not the custom of the Roman emperors to permit any of their inferiors to sit beside them, not even of such as are born subjects of their empire; and it is necessary to respect the customs of the country.' But he, answering nothing to Baldwin, stared yet more fixedly upon the Emperor, and muttered to himself something in his own dialect, which, being interpreted, was to this effect —'Behold, what rustic fellow [χωρίτης] is this, to be seated alone while such leaders stand around him!' The movement of his lips did not escape the Emperor, who called to him one that understood the Latin dialect, and inquired what words the man had spoken. When he heard them, the Emperor said nothing to the other Latins, but kept the thing to himself. When, however, the business was all over, he called near to him by himself that swelling and shameless Latin [ὑψηλόφρονα Λατῖνον ἐκεῖνον καὶ ἀναιδῆ], and asked of him, who he was, of what lineage, and from what region he had come. 'I am a Frank,' said he, 'of pure blood, of the nobles. One thing I know, that, where three roads meet in the place from which I came, there is an ancient church, in which whosoever has the desire to measure himself against another in single combat prays God to help him therein, and afterwards abides the coming of one willing to encounter him. At that spot long time did I remain, but the man bold enough to stand against me I found not.' Hearing these words, the Emperor said, 'If hitherto thou hast sought battles in vain, the time is at hand which will furnish thee with abundance of them. And I advise thee to place thyself neither before the phalanx nor in its rear, but to stand fast in the midst of thy fellow-soldiers; for of old time I am well acquainted with the warfare of the Turks.' With such advice he dismissed not only this man, but the rest of those who were about to depart on that expedition. — *Alexiad*, Book x. pp. 237, 238.

Ducange, as is mentioned in the novel, identifies the church thus described by the crusader with that of Our Lady of Soissons, of which a French poet of the days of Louis VII. says —

> Veiller y vont encor li pelerin,
> Cil qui bataille veulent fere et fournir.
>
> DUCANGE *in Alexiad*, p. 301.

The Princess Anna Comnena, it may be proper to observe,

was born on the first of December 1083, and was consequently in her fifteenth year when the chiefs of the first crusade made their appearance in her father's court. Even then, however, it is not improbable that she might have been the wife of Nicephorus Briennius, whom, many years after his death, she speaks of in her history as τὸν ἐμοῦ Καίσαρα, and in other terms equally affectionate. The bitterness with which she uniformly mentions Bohemund Count of Tarentum, afterwards Prince of Antioch, has, however, been ascribed to a disappointment in love; and on one remarkable occasion the princess certainly expressed great contempt of her husband. I am aware of no other authorities for the liberties taken with this lady's conjugal character in the novel.

Her husband, Nicephorus Briennius, was the grandson [son, perhaps nephew] of the person of that name who figures in history as the rival, in a contest for the imperial throne, of Nicephorus Botoniates. He was, on his marriage with Anna Comnena, invested with the rank of *panhypersebastos*, or *omnium augustissimus;* but Alexius deeply offended him by afterwards recognising the superior and simpler dignity of a *sebastos*. His eminent qualities, both in peace and war, are acknowledged by Gibbon; and he has left us four books of Memoirs, detailing the early part of his father-in-law's history, and valuable as being the work of an eye-witness of the most important events which he describes. Anna Comnena appears to have considered it her duty to take up the task which her husband had not lived to complete; and hence *The Alexiad* — certainly, with all its defects, the first historical work that has as yet proceeded from a female pen.

The life of the Emperor Alexius, says Gibbon, has been delineated by [the pen of] a favourite daughter, who was inspired by a tender regard for his person and a laudable zeal to perpetuate his virtues. Conscious of the just suspicion of her readers, the Princess Anna Comnena repeatedly protests that, besides her personal knowledge, she had searched the discourse and writings of the most respectable veterans; that, after an interval of thirty years, forgotten by, and forgetful of, the world, her mournful solitude was inaccessible to hope and fear; and that truth, the naked, perfect truth, was more dear and sacred than the memory of her parent. Yet, instead of the simplicity of style and narrative which wins our belief, an elaborate affectation of rhetoric and science betrays in every page the vanity of a female author. The genuine character of Alexius is lost in a vague constellation of virtues; and the perpetual strain of panegyric and apology awakens our jealousy to question the veracity of the historian and the merit of the hero. We cannot, however, refuse her judicious and important remark, that the disorders of the times were the misfortune

and the glory of Alexius; and that every calamity which can afflict a declining empire was accumulated on his reign by the justice of Heaven and the vices of his predecessors. In the east, the victorious Turks had spread, from Persia to the Hellespont, the reign of the Koran and the Crescent; the west was invaded by the adventurous valour of the Normans; and, in the moments of peace, the Danube poured forth new swarms, who had gained in the science of war what they had lost in the ferociousness of manners. The sea was not less hostile than the land; and, while the frontiers were assaulted by an open enemy, the palace was distracted with secret treason and conspiracy.

On a sudden, the banner of the Cross was displayed by the Latins: Europe was precipitated on Asia; and Constantinople had almost been swept away by this impetuous deluge. In the tempest Alexius steered the imperial vessel with dexterity and courage. At the head of his armies, he was bold in action, skilful in stratagem, patient of fatigue, ready to improve his advantages, and rising from his defeats with inexhaustible vigour. The discipline of the camp was revived, and a new generation of men and soldiers was created by the example and the precepts of their leader. In his intercourse with the Latins, Alexius was patient and artful; his discerning eye pervaded the new system of an unknown world. . . .

The increase of the male and female branches of his family adorned the throne and secured the succession; but their princely luxury and pride offended the patricians, exhausted the revenue, and insulted the misery of the people. Anna is a faithful witness that his happiness was destroyed, and his health was broken, by the cares of a public life; the patience of Constantinople was fatigued by the length and severity of his reign: and before Alexius expired, he had lost the love and reverence of his subjects. The clergy could not forgive his application of the sacred riches to the defence of the state; but they applauded his theological learning and ardent zeal for the orthodox faith, which he defended with his tongue, his pen, and his sword. . . . Even the sincerity of his moral and religious virtues was suspected by the persons who had passed their lives in his familiar confidence. In his last hours, when he was pressed by his wife Irene to alter the succession, he raised his head and breathed a pious ejaculation on the vanity of this world. The indignant reply of the Empress may be inscribed as an epitaph on his tomb — 'You die as you have lived, an hypocrite.'

It was the wish of Irene to supplant the eldest of her surviving sons in favour of her daughter, the Princess Anna, whose philosophy would not have refused the weight of a diadem. But the order of male succession was asserted by the friends of their country; the lawful heir drew the royal signet from the finger of his insensible or conscious father, and the empire obeyed the master of the palace. Anna Comnena was stimulated by ambition and revenge to conspire against the life of her brother; and when the design was prevented by the fears or scruples of her husband, she passionately exclaimed that nature had mistaken the two sexes, and had endowed Bryennius with the soul of a woman. . . . After the discovery of her treason, the life and fortune of Anna were justly forfeited to the laws. Her life was spared by the clemency of the emperor; but he visited the pomp and treasures of her palace, and bestowed the rich confiscation on the most deserving of his friends. — *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xlviii.

The year of Anna's death is nowhere recorded. She appears to have written *The Alexiad* in a convent; and to have spent nearly thirty years in this retirement before her book was published.

For accurate particulars of the public events touched on in *Count Robert of Paris*, the reader is referred to the above quoted author, chapters xlviii. and lviii., and to the first volume of Mills's *History of the Crusades*.[1]

J. G. L[OCKHART].

LONDON, 1*st March* 1833.

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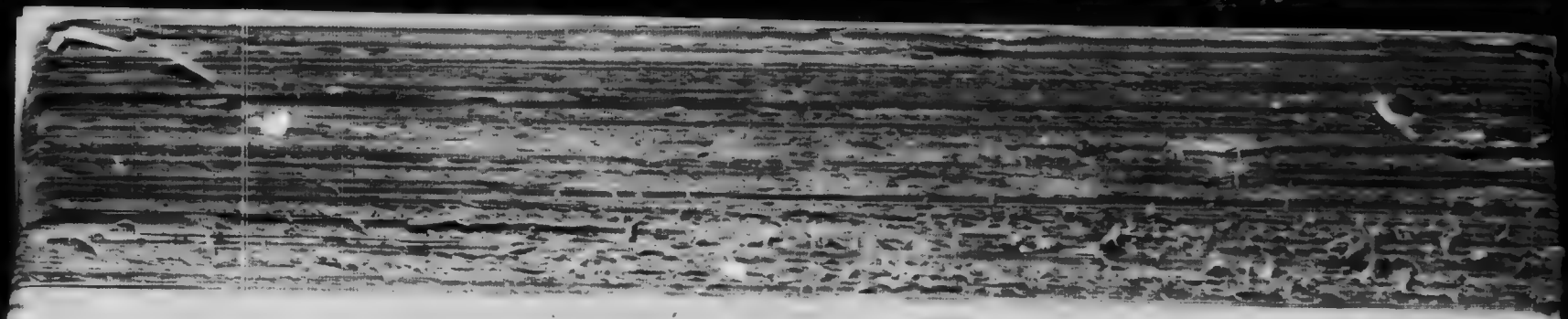
[1] The article 'Chivalry' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Supplement to 3d, 4th, and 5th editions, written by Scott, will also be found to contain an interesting allusion to the chief incident in chapter ix. of the novel (*Laing*).



COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS

CHAPTER I

Leontius. That power that kindly spreads
The clouds, a signal of impending showers,
To warn the wandering linnet to the shade,
Beheld without concern expiring Greece,
And not one prodigy foretold our fate.
Demetrius. A thousand horrid prodigies foretold it.
A feeble government, eluded laws,
A factious populace, luxurious nobles,
And all the maladies of sinking states.
When public villainy, too strong for justice,
Shows his bold front, the harbinger of ruin,
Can brave Leontius call for airy wonders,
Which cheats interpret, and which fools regard?

Irene, Act I.

THE close observers of vegetable nature have remarked that, when a new graft is taken from an aged tree, it possesses indeed in exterior form the appearance of a youthful shoot, but has in fact attained to the same state of maturity, or even decay, which has been reached by the parent stem. Hence, it is said, arises the general decline and death that about the same season is often observed to spread itself through individual trees of some particular species, all of which, deriving their vital powers from the parent stock, are therefore incapable of protracting their existence longer than it does.

In the same manner, efforts have been made by the mighty of the earth to transplant large cities, states, and communities by one great and sudden exertion, expecting to secure to the new capital the wealth, the dignity, the magnificent decorations and unlimited extent of the ancient city which they desire to renovate; while, at the same time, they hope to begin a new succession of ages from the date of the new structure, to last,

they imagine, as long, and with as much fame, as its predecessor, which the founder hopes his new metropolis may replace in all its youthful glories. But nature has her laws, which seem to apply to the social as well as the vegetable system. It appears to be a general rule that what is to last long should be slowly matured and gradually improved, while every sudden effort, however gigantic, to bring about the speedy execution of a plan calculated to endure for ages is doomed to exhibit symptoms of premature decay from its very commencement. Thus, in a beautiful Oriental tale, a dervise explains to the sultan how he had reared the magnificent trees among which they walked by nursing their shoots from the seed; and the prince's pride is damped when he reflects that those plantations, so simply raised, were gathering new vigour from each returning sun, while his own exhausted cedars, which had been transplanted by one violent effort, were drooping their majestic heads in the Valley of Orez.[1]

It has been allowed, I believe, by all men of taste, many of whom have been late visitants of Constantinople, that, if it were possible to survey the whole globe with a view to fixing a seat of universal empire, all who are capable of making such a choice would give their preference to the city of Constantine, as including the great recommendations of beauty, wealth, security, and eminence. Yet, with all these advantages of situation and climate, and with all the architectural splendour of its churches and halls, its quarries of marble, and its treasure-houses of gold, the imperial founder must himself have learned that, although he could employ all these rich materials in obedience to his own wish, it was the mind of man itself, those intellectual faculties refined by the ancients to the highest degree, which had produced the specimens of talent at which men paused and wondered, whether as subjects of art or of moral labour. The power of the Emperor might indeed strip other cities of their statues and their shrines, in order to decorate that which he had fixed upon as his new capital, but the men who had performed great actions, and those, almost equally esteemed, by whom such deeds were celebrated, in poetry, in painting, and in music, had ceased to exist. The nation, though still the most civilised in the world, had passed beyond that period of society when the desire of fair fame is of itself the sole or chief motive for the labour of the historian or the poet, the painter or the statuary. The slavish and despotic

[1] Tale of 'Mirglip the Persian,' in the *Tales of the Genii* [by Sir Charles Morell, 1765].

constitution introduced into the empire had long since entirely destroyed that public spirit which animated the free history of Rome, leaving nothing but feeble recollections, which produced no emulation.

To speak as of an animated substance, if Constantine could have regenerated his new metropolis, by transfusing into it the vital and vivifying principles of old Rome, that brilliant spark no longer remained for Constantinople to borrow or for Rome to lend.

In one most important circumstance, the state of the capital of Constantine had been totally changed, and unspeakably to its advantage. The world was now Christian, and, with the pagan code, had got rid of its load of disgraceful superstition. Nor is there the least doubt that the better faith produced its natural and desirable fruits in society, in gradually ameliorating the hearts and taming the passions of the people. But while many of the converts were turning meekly towards their new creed, some, in the arrogance of their understanding, were limiting the Scriptures by their own devices, and others failed not to make religious character or spiritual rank the means of rising to temporal power. Thus it happened at this critical period that the effects of this great change in the religion of the country, although producing an immediate harvest, as well as sowing much good seed which was to grow hereafter, did not, in the 4th century, flourish so as to shed at once that predominating influence which its principles might have taught men to expect.

Even the borrowed splendour in which Constantine decked his city bore in it something which seemed to mark premature decay. The imperial founder, in seizing upon the ancient statues, pictures, obelisks, and works of art, acknowledged his own incapacity to supply their place with the productions of later genius; and when the world, and particularly Rome, was plundered to adorn Constantinople, the Emperor, under whom the work was carried on, might be compared to a prodigal youth, who strips an aged parent of her youthful ornaments, in order to decorate a flaunting paramour, on whose brow all must consider them as misplaced.

Constantinople, therefore, when in 324 it first arose in imperial majesty out of the humble Byzantium, showed, even in its birth, and amid its adventitious splendour, as we have already said, some intimations of that speedy decay to which the whole civilised world, then limited within the Roman empire, was in-

ternally and imperceptibly tending. Nor was it many ages ere these prognostications of declension were fully verified.

In the year 1080 [1081], Alexius Comnenus[1] ascended the throne of the Empire — that is, he was declared sovereign of Constantinople, its precincts and dependencies; nor, if he was disposed to lead a life of relaxation, would the savage incursions of the Scythians or the Hungarians frequently disturb the imperial slumbers, if limited to his own capital. It may be supposed that this safety did not extend much farther; for it is said that the Empress Pulcheria had built a church to the Virgin Mary as remote as possible from the gate of the city, to save her devotions from the risk of being interrupted by the hostile yell of the barbarians, and the reigning emperor had constructed a palace near the same spot, and for the same reason.

Alexius Comnenus was in the condition of a monarch who rather derives consequence from the wealth and importance of his predecessors, and the great extent of their original dominions, than from what remnants of fortune had descended to the present generation. This emperor, except nominally, no more ruled over his dismembered provinces than a half-dead horse can exercise power over those limbs on which the hooded crow and the vulture have already begun to settle and select their prey.

In different parts of his territory different enemies arose, who waged successful or dubious war against the Emperor; and of the numerous nations with whom he was engaged in hostilities, whether the Franks from the west, the Turks advancing from the east, the Cumans and Scythians pouring their barbarous numbers and unceasing storm of arrows from the north, and the Saracens, or the tribes into which they were divided, pressing from the south, there was not one for whom the Grecian empire did not spread a tempting repast. Each of these various enemies had their own particular habits of war, and a way of manœuvring in battle peculiar to themselves. But the Roman, as the unfortunate subject of the Greek empire was still called, was by far the weakest, the most ignorant, and most timid who could be dragged into the field; and the Emperor was happy in his own good luck when he found it possible to conduct a defensive war on a counterbalancing principle, making use of the Scythian to repel the Turk, or of both these savage peoples to drive back the fiery

[1] See Gibbon, chap. xlviii., for the origin and early history of the house of the Comneni.

footed Frank, whom Peter the Hermit had, in the time of Alexius, waked to double fury by the powerful influence of the crusades.

If, therefore, Alexius Comnenus was, during his anxious seat upon the throne of the East, reduced to use a base and truckling course of policy, if he was sometimes reluctant to fight when he had a conscious doubt of the valour of his troops, if he commonly employed cunning and dissimulation instead of wisdom, and perfidy instead of courage, his expedients were the disgrace of the age rather than his own.

Again, the Emperor Alexius may be blamed for affecting a degree of state which was closely allied to imbecility. He was proud of assuming in his own person, and of bestowing upon others, the painted show of various orders of nobility, even now, when the rank within the prince's gift was become an additional reason for the free barbarian despising the imperial noble. That the Greek court was encumbered with unmeaning ceremonies, in order to make amends for the want of that veneration which ought to have been called forth by real worth and the presence of actual power, was not the particular fault of that prince, but belonged to the system of the government of Constantinople for ages. Indeed, in its trumpery etiquette, which provided rules for the most trivial points of a man's behaviour during the day, the Greek empire resembled no existing power in its minute follies except that of Pekin; both, doubtless, being influenced by the same vain wish to add seriousness and an appearance of importance to objects which, from their trivial nature, could admit no such distinction.

Yet thus far we must justify Alexius, that, humble as were the expedients he had recourse to, they were more useful to his empire than the measures of a more proud and high-spirited prince might have proved in the same circumstances. He was no champion to break a lance against the breastplate of his Frankish rival, the famous Bohemond of Antioch,[1] but there were many occasions on which he hazarded his life freely; and, so far as we can see from a minute perusal of his achievements, the Emperor of Greece was never so dangerous 'under shield' as when any foeman desired to stop him while retreating from a conflict in which he had been worsted.

But, besides that he did not hesitate, according to the custom of the time, at least occasionally, to commit his person to the perils of close combat, Alexius also possessed such knowl-

[1] See Note 1.

edge of a general's profession as is required in our modern days. He knew how to occupy military positions to the best advantage, and often covered defeats, or improved dubious conflicts, in a manner highly to the disappointment of those who deemed that the work of war was done only on the field of battle.

If Alexius Comnenus thus understood the evolutions of war, he was still better skilled in those of politics, where, soaring far above the express purpose of his immediate negotiation, the Emperor was sure to gain some important and permanent advantage; though very often he was ultimately defeated by the unblushing fickleness or avowed treachery of the barbarians, as the Greeks generally termed all other nations, and particularly those tribes (they can hardly be termed states) by which their own empire was surrounded.

We may conclude our brief character of Comnenus by saying that, had he not been called on to fill the station of a monarch who was under the necessity of making himself dreaded, as one who was exposed to all manner of conspiracies, both in and out of his own family, he might, in all probability, have been regarded as an honest and humane prince. Certainly he showed himself a good-natured man, and dealt less in cutting off heads and extinguishing eyes than had been the practice of his predecessors, who generally took this method of shortening the ambitious views of competitors.

It remains to be mentioned, that Alexius had his full share of the superstition of the age, which he covered with a species of hypocrisy. It is even said that his wife, Irene, who, of course, was best acquainted with the real character of the Emperor, taxed her dying husband with practising, in his last moments, the dissimulation which had been his companion during life.[1] He took also a deep interest in all matters respecting the church, where heresy, which the Emperor held, or affected to hold, in great horror, appeared to him to lurk. Nor do we discover in his treatment of the Manichæans or Paulicians that pity for their speculative errors which modern times might think had been well purchased by the extent of the temporal services of these unfortunate sectaries. Alexius knew no indulgence for those who misinterpreted the mysteries of the church or of its doctrines; and the duty of defending religion against schismatics was, in his opinion, as peremptorily demanded from him as that of protecting the empire against

[1] See Gibbon, chap. xlviii.

the numberless tribes of barbarians who were encroaching on its boundaries on every side.

Such a mixture of sense and weakness, of meanness and dignity, of prudent discretion and poverty of spirit, which last, in the European mode of viewing things, approached to cowardice, formed the leading traits of the character of Alexius Comnenus, at a period when the fate of Greece, and all that was left in that country of art and civilisation, were trembling in the balance, and likely to be saved or lost according to the abilities of the Emperor for playing the very difficult game which was put into his hands.

These few leading circumstances will recall, to any one who is tolerably well read in history, the peculiarities of the period at which we have found a resting-place for the foundation of our story.

CHAPTER II

Othus. This superb successor
Of the earth's mistress, as thou vainly speakest,
Stands midst these ages as, on the wide ocean,
The last spared fragment of a spacious land,
That in some grand and awful ministration
Of mighty nature has engulfed been,
Doth lift aloft its dark and rocky cliffs
O'er the wild waste around, and sadly frowns
In lonely majesty.

Constantine Palæologus, Scene I.

OUR scene in the capital of the Eastern Empire opens at what is termed the Golden Gate of Constantinople; and it may be said in passing, that this splendid epithet is not so lightly bestowed as may be expected from the inflated language of the Greeks, which throws such an appearance of exaggeration about them, their buildings, and monuments.

The massive, and seemingly impregnable, walls with which Constantine surrounded the city were greatly improved and added to by Theodosius, called the Great. A triumphal arch, decorated with the architecture of a better, though already a degenerate, age, and serving, at the same time, as an useful entrance, introduced the stranger into the city. On the top, a statue of bronze represented Victory, the goddess who had inclined the scales of battle in favour of Theodosius; and, as the artist determined to be wealthy if he could not be tasteful, the gilded ornaments with which the inscriptions were set off readily led to the popular name of the gate. Figures carved in a distant and happier period of the art glanced from the walls, without assorting happily with the taste in which these were built. The more modern ornaments of the Golden Gate bore, at the period of our story, an aspect very different from those indicating the 'conquest brought back to the city' and 'the eternal peace,' which the flattering inscriptions recorded as having been extorted by the sword of Theodosius. Four or

five military engines, for throwing darts of the largest size, were placed upon the summit of the arch; and what had been originally designed as a specimen of architectural embellishment was now applied to the purposes of defence.

It was the hour of evening, and the cool and refreshing breeze from the sea inclined each passenger, whose business was not of a very urgent description, to loiter on his way, and cast a glance at the romantic gateway, and the various interesting objects of nature and art which the city of Constantinople[1] presented, as well to the inhabitants as to strangers.

One individual, however, seemed to indulge more wonder and curiosity than could have been expected from a native of the city, and looked upon the rarities around with a quick and startled eye, that marked an imagination awakened by sights that were new and strange. The appearance of this person bespoke a foreigner of military habits, who seemed, from his complexion, to have his birthplace far from the Grecian metropolis, whatever chance had at present brought him to the Golden Gate, or whatever place he filled in the Emperor's service.

This young man was about two-and-twenty years old, remarkably finely-formed and athletic—qualities well understood by the citizens of Constantinople, whose habits of frequenting the public games had taught them at least an acquaintance with the human person, and where, in the select of their own countrymen, they saw the handsomest specimens of the human race.

These were, however, not generally so tall as the stranger at the Golden Gate, while his piercing blue eyes, and the fair hair which descended from under a light helmet gaily ornamented with silver, bearing on its summit a crest resembling a dragon in the act of expanding its terrible jaws, intimated a Northern descent, to which the extreme purity of his complexion also bore witness. His beauty, however, though he was eminently distinguished both in features and in person, was not liable to the charge of effeminacy. From this it was rescued both by his strength and by the air of confidence and self-possession with which the youth seemed to regard the wonders around him, not indicating the stupid and helpless gaze of a mind equally inexperienced and incapable of receiving instruction, but expressing the bold intellect which at once understands the greater part of the information which it receives, and com-

[1] See Note 2.

mands the spirit to toil in search of the meaning of that which it has not comprehended, or may fear it has misinterpreted. This look of awakened attention and intelligence gave interest to the young barbarian; and while the bystanders were amazed that a savage from some unknown or remote corner of the universe should possess a noble countenance bespeaking a mind so elevated, they respected him for the composure with which he witnessed so many things, the fashion, the splendour, nay, the very use, of which must have been recently new to him.

The young man's personal equipments exhibited a singular mixture of splendour and effeminacy, and enabled the experienced spectators to ascertain his nation, and the capacity in which he served. We have already mentioned the fanciful and crested helmet which was a distinction of the foreigner, to which the reader must add in his imagination a small cuirass or breastplate of silver, so sparingly fashioned as obviously to afford little security to the broad chest, on which it rather hung like an ornament than covered as a buckler; nor, if a well-thrown dart or strongly-shod arrow should alight full on this rich piece of armour, was there much hope that it could protect the bosom which it partially shielded.

From betwixt the shoulders hung down over the back what had the appearance of a bearskin; but, when more closely examined, it was only a very skilful imitation of the spoils of the chase, being in reality a surcoat composed of strong shaggy silk, so woven as to exhibit, at a little distance, no inaccurate representation of a bear's hide. A light crooked sword, or scimitar, sheathed in a scabbard of gold and ivory, hung by the left side of the stranger, the ornamented hilt of which appeared much too small for the large-jointed hand of the young Hercules who was thus gaily attired. A dress, purple in colour, and sitting close to the limbs, covered the body of the soldier to a little above the knee; from thence the knees and legs were bare to the calf, to which the reticulated strings of the sandals rose from the instep, the ligatures being there fixed by a golden coin of the reigning emperor, converted into a species of clasp for the purpose.

But a weapon which seemed more particularly adapted to the young barbarian's size, and incapable of being used by a man of less formidable limbs and sinews, was a battle-axe, the firm iron-guarded staff of which was formed of tough elm, strongly inlaid and defended with brass, while many a plate and ring were indented in the handle, to hold the wood and

the steel parts together. The axe itself was composed of two blades, turning different ways, with a sharp steel spike projecting from between them. The steel part, both spike and blade, was burnished as bright as a mirror; and though its ponderous size must have been burdensome to one weaker than himself, yet the young soldier carried it as carelessly along as if it were but a feather's weight. It was, indeed, a skilfully constructed weapon, so well balanced, that it was much lighter in striking and in recovery than he who saw it in the hands of another could easily have believed.

The carrying arms of itself showed that the military man was a stranger. The native Greeks had that mark of a civilised people, that they never bore weapons during the time of peace, unless the wearer chanced to be numbered among those whose military profession and employment required them to be always in arms. Such soldiers by profession were easily distinguished from the peaceful citizens; and it was with some evident show of fear, as well as dislike, that the passengers observed to each other that the stranger was a Varangian, an expression which intimated a barbarian of the imperial body-guard.

To supply the deficiency of valour among his own subjects, and to procure soldiers who should be personally dependent on the emperor, the Greek sovereigns had been, for a great many years, in the custom of maintaining in their pay, as near their person as they could, the steady services of a select number of mercenaries in the capacity of body-guards, which were numerous enough, when their steady discipline and inflexible loyalty were taken in conjunction with their personal strength and indomitable courage, to defeat not only any traitorous attempt on the imperial person, but to quell open rebellions, unless such were supported by a great proportion of the military force. Their pay was therefore liberal; their rank and established character for prowess gave them a degree of consideration among the people, whose reputation for valour had not for some ages stood high; and if, as foreigners, and the members of a privileged body, the Varangians were sometimes employed in arbitrary and unpopular services, the natives were so apt to fear, while they disliked, them, that the hardy strangers disturbed themselves but little about the light in which they were regarded by the inhabitants of Constantinople. Their dress and accoutrements, while within the city, partook of the rich, or rather gaudy, costume which we have described, bearing only a sort of affected resemblance to that which the

Varangians wore in their native forests. But the individuals of this select corps were, when their services were required beyond the city, furnished with armour and weapons more resembling those which they were accustomed to wield in their own country, possessing much less of the splendour of war, and a far greater portion of its effective terrors; and thus they were summoned to take the field.

This body of Varangians (which term is, according to one interpretation, merely a general expression for barbarians) was, in an early age of the empire, formed of the roving and piratical inhabitants of the North, whom a love of adventure, the greatest perhaps that ever was indulged, and a contempt of danger, which never had a parallel in the history of human nature, drove forth upon the pathless ocean. 'Piracy,' says Gibbon, with his usual spirit, 'was the exercise, the trade, the glory, and the virtue of the Scandinavian youth. Impatient of a bleak climate and narrow limits, they started from the banquet, grasped their arms, sounded their horn, ascended their vessels, and explored every coast that promised either spoil or settlement.'[1]

The conquests made in France and Britain by these wild sea-kings, as they were called, have obscured the remembrance of other Northern champions, who, long before the time of Comnenus, made excursions as far as Constantinople, and witnessed with their own eyes the wealth and the weakness of the Grecian empire itself. Numbers found their way thither through the pathless wastes of Russia; others navigated the Mediterranean in their sea-serpents, as they termed their piratical vessels. The emperors, terrified at the appearance of these daring inhabitants of the frozen zone, had recourse to the usual policy of a rich and unwarlike people, bought with gold the service of their swords, and thus formed a corps of satellites more distinguished for valour than the famed Prætorian Bands of Rome, and, perhaps because fewer in number, unalterably loyal to their new princes.

But, at a later period of the empire, it began to be more difficult for the emperors to obtain recruits for their favourite and selected corps, the Northern nations having now in a great measure laid aside the piratical and roving habits which had driven their ancestors from the straits of Elsinore to those of Sestos and Abydos. The corps of the Varangians must therefore have died out, or have been filled up with less worthy

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. x., chapter lv. p. 221, 8vo edition.

materials, had not the conquests made by the Normans in the far distant west sent to the aid of Comnenus a large body of the dispossessed inhabitants of the islands of Britain, and particularly of England, who furnished recruits to his chosen body-guard. These were, in fact, Anglo-Saxons; but, in the confused idea of geography received at the court of Constantinople, they were naturally enough called Anglo-Danes, as their native country was confounded with the Thule of the ancients, by which expression the archipelago of Zetland and Orkney is properly to be understood, though, according to the notions of the Greeks, it comprised either Denmark or Britain. The emigrants, however, spoke a language not very dissimilar to the original Varangians, and adopted the name the more readily, that it seemed to remind them of their unhappy fate, the appellation being in one sense capable of being interpreted as exiles. Excepting one or two chief commanders, whom the Emperor judged worthy of such high trust, the Varangians were officered by men of their own nation; and with so many privileges, being joined by many of their countrymen from time to time, as the crusades, pilgrimages, or discontent at home drove fresh supplies of the Anglo-Saxons, or Anglo-Danes, to the east, the Varangians subsisted in strength to the last days of the Greek empire, retaining their native language, along with the unblemished loyalty and unabated martial spirit which characterised their fathers.

This account of the Varangian Guard[1] is strictly historical, and might be proved by reference to the Byzantine historians; most of whom, and also Villehardouin's account of the taking of the city of Constantinople by the Franks and Venetians, make repeated mention of this celebrated and singular body of Englishmen, forming a mercenary guard attendant on the person of the Greek emperors.

Having said enough to explain why an individual Varangian should be strolling about the Golden Gate, we may proceed in the story which we have commenced.

Let it not be thought extraordinary that this soldier of the life-guard should be looked upon with some degree of curiosity by the passing citizens. It must be supposed that, from their peculiar duties, they were not encouraged to hold frequent intercourse or communication with the inhabitants; and, besides that they had duties of police occasionally to exercise amongst them, which made them generally more dreaded than

[1] See Note 3.

beloved, they were at the same time conscious that their high pay, splendid appointments, and immediate dependence on the emperor were subjects of envy to the other forces. They, therefore, kept much in the neighbourhood of their own barracks, and were seldom seen straggling remote from them, unless they had a commission of government entrusted to their charge.

This being the case, it was natural that a people so curious as the Greeks should busy themselves in eyeing the stranger as he loitered in one spot, or wandered to and fro, like a man who either could not find some place which he was seeking, or had failed to meet some person with whom he had an appointment, for which the ingenuity of the passengers found a thousand different and inconsistent reasons. 'A Varangian,' said one citizen to another, 'and upon duty — ahem! Then I presume to say in your ear ——'

'What do you imagine is his object?' inquired the party to whom this information was addressed.

'Gods and goddesses! do you think I can tell you? But suppose that he is lurking here to hear what folk say of the Emperor,' answered the *quidnunc* of Constantinople.

'That is not likely,' said the querist: 'these Varangians do not speak our language, and are not extremely well fitted for spies, since few of them pretend to any intelligible notion of the Grecian tongue. It is not likely, I think, that the Emperor would employ as a spy a man who did not understand the language of the country.'

'But if there are, as all men fancy,' answered the politician, 'persons among these barbarian soldiers who can speak almost all languages, you will admit that such are excellently qualified for seeing clearly around them, since they possess the talent of beholding and reporting, while no one has the slightest idea of suspecting them.'

'It may well be,' replied his companion; 'but, since we see so clearly the fox's foot and paws protruding from beneath the seeming sheep's fleece, or rather, by your leave, the *bear's* hide yonder, had we not better be jogging homeward, ere it be pretended we have insulted a Varangian Guard?'

This surmise of danger insinuated by the last speaker, who was a much older and more experienced politician than his friend, determined both on a hasty retreat. They adjusted their cloaks, caught hold of each other's arm, and, speaking fast and thick as they started new subjects of suspicion, they

sped, close coupled together, towards their habitations in a different and distant quarter of the town.

In the meantime, the sunset was nigh over; and the long shadows of the walls, bulwarks, and arches were projecting from the westward in deeper and blacker shade. The Varangian seemed tired of the short and lingering circle in which he had now trodden for more than an hour, and in which he still loitered like an unliberated spirit, which cannot leave the haunted spot till licensed by the spell which has brought it hither. Even so the barbarian, casting an impatient glance to the sun, which was setting in a blaze of light behind a rich grove of cypress-trees, looked for some accommodation on the benches of stone which were placed under shadow of the triumphal arch of Theodosius, drew the axe, which was his principal weapon, close to his side, wrapped his cloak about him, and, though his dress was not in other respects a fit attire for slumber, any more than the place well selected for repose, yet in less than three minutes he was fast asleep. The irresistible impulse which induced him to seek for repose in a place very indifferently fitted for the purpose might be weariness consequent upon the military vigils which had proved a part of his duty on the preceding evening. At the same time, his spirit was so alive within him, even while he gave way to this transient fit of oblivion, that he remained almost awake even with shut eyes, and no hound ever seemed to sleep more lightly than our Anglo-Saxon at the Golden Gate of Constantinople.

And now the slumberer, as the loiterer had been before, was the subject of observation to the accidental passengers. Two men entered the porch in company. One was a somewhat slight-made but alert-looking man, by name Lysimachus, and by profession a designer. A roll of paper in his hand, with a little satchel containing a few chalks, or pencils, completed his stock-in-trade; and his acquaintance with the remains of ancient art gave him a power of talking on the subject which unfortunately bore more than due proportion to his talents of execution. His companion, a magnificent-looking man in form, and so far resembling the young barbarian, but more clownish and peasant-like in the expression of his features, was Stephanos the wrestler, well known in the *palestra*.

'Stop here, my friend,' said the artist, producing his pencils, 'till I make a sketch for my youthful Hercules.'

'I thought Hercules had been a Greek,' said the wrestler. 'This sleeping animal is a barbarian.'

The tone intimated some offence, and the designer hastened to soothe the displeasure which he had thoughtlessly excited. Stephanos, known by the surname of Castor, who was highly distinguished for gymnastic exercises, was a sort of patron to the little artist, and not unlikely by his own reputation to bring the talents of his friend into notice.

'Beauty and strength,' said the adroit artist, 'are of no particular nation; and may our muse never deign me her prize, but it is my greatest pleasure to compare them as existing in the uncultivated savage of the North and when they are found in the darling of an enlightened people, who has added the height of gymnastic skill to the most distinguished natural qualities, such as we can now only see in the works of Phidias and Praxiteles, or in our living model of the gymnastic champions of antiquity.'

'Nay, I acknowledge that the Varangian is a proper man,' said the athletic hero, softening his tone; 'but the poor savage hath not, perhaps in his lifetime, had a single drop of oil on his bosom. Hercules instituted the Isthmian games ——'

'But, hold! what sleeps he with, wrapt so close in his bear-skin?' said the artist. 'Is it a club?'

'Away — away, my friend!' cried Stephanos, as they looked closer on the sleeper. 'Do you not know that is the instrument of their barbarous office? They do not war with swords or lances, as if destined to attack men of flesh and blood, but with maces and axes, as if they were to hack limbs formed of stone and sinews of oak. I will wager my crown (of withered parsley) that he lies here to arrest some distinguished commander who has offended the government! He would not have been thus formidably armed otherwise. Away — away, good Lysimachus; let us respect the slumbers of the bear.'

So saying, the champion of the *palestra* made off with less apparent confidence than his size and strength might have inspired.

Others, now thinly straggling, passed onward as the evening closed, and the shadows of the cypress-trees fell darker around. Two females of the lower rank cast their eyes on the sleeper. 'Holy Maria!' said one, 'if he does not put me in mind of the Eastern tale, how the genie brought a gallant young prince from his nuptial chamber in Egypt, and left him sleeping at the gate of Damascus. I will awake the poor lamb, lest he catch harm from the night dew.'

'Harm!' answered the older and crosser-looking woman.

'Ay, such harm as the cold water of the Cydnus does to the wild swan. A lamb! Ay, forsooth! Why, he 's a wolf or a bear, at least a Varangian, and no modest matron would exchange a word with such an unmannered barbarian. I 'll tell you what one of these English Danes did to me ——'

So saying, she drew on her companion, who followed with some reluctance, seeming to listen to her gabble, while she looked back upon the sleeper.

The total disappearance of the sun, and nearly at the same time the departure of the twilight, which lasts so short time in that tropical region — one of the few advantages which a more temperate climate possesses over it being the longer continuance of that sweet and placid light — gave signal to the warders of the city to shut the folding leaves of the Golden Gate, leaving a wicket lightly bolted for the passage of those whom business might have detained too late without the walls, and indeed for all who chose to pay a small coin. The position and apparent insensibility of the Varangian did not escape those who had charge of the gate, of whom there was a strong guard which belonged to the ordinary Greek forces.

'By Castor and by Pollux,' said the centurion, for the Greeks swore by the ancient deities, although they no longer worshipped them, and preserved those military distinctions with which 'the steady Romans shook the world,' although they were altogether degenerated from their original manners — 'by Castor and Pollux, comrades, we cannot gather gold in this gate according as its legend tells us, yet it will be our fault if we cannot glean a goodly crop of silver; and though the golden age be the most ancient and honourable, yet in this degenerate time it is much if we see a glimpse of the inferior metal.'

'Unworthy are we to follow the noble centurion Harpax,' answered one of the soldiers of the watch, who showed the shaven head and the single tuft[1] of a Mussulman, 'if we do not hold silver a sufficient cause to bestir ourselves, when there has been no gold to be had — as, by the faith of an honest man, I think we can hardly tell its colour — whether out of the imperial treasury or obtained at the expense of individuals, for many long moons!'

'But this silver,' said the centurion, 'thou shalt see with thine own eye, and hear it ring a knell in the purse which holds our common stock.'

[1] One tuft is left on the shaven crown of the Moslem, for the angel to grasp by, when conveying him to Paradise

'Which *did* hold it, as thou wouldst say, most valiant commander,' replied the inferior warder; 'but what that purse holds now, save a few miserable oboli for purchasing certain pickled pot-herbs and salt fish, to relish our allowance of stummed wine, I cannot tell, but willingly give my share of the contents to the devil, if either purse or platter exhibits symptom of any age richer than the age of copper.'

'I will replenish our treasury,' said the centurion, 'were our stock yet lower than it is. Stand up close by the wicket, my masters. Bethink you, we are the Imperial Guards, or the guards of the Imperial City, it is all one, and let us have no man rush past us on a sudden; and now that we are on our guard, I will unfold to you —— But stop,' said the valiant centurion, 'are we all here true brothers? Do all well understand the ancient and laudable customs of our watch - keeping all things secret which concern the profit and advantage of this our vigil, and aiding and abetting the common cause, without information or treachery?'

'You are strangely suspicious to-night,' answered the sentinel. 'Methinks we have stood by you without tale-telling in matters which were more weighty. Have you forgot the passage of the jeweller, which was neither the gold nor silver age; but if there were a diamond one ——'

'Peace, good Ismail the Infidel,' said the centurion -- 'for, I thank Heaven, we are of all religions, so it is to be hoped we must have the true one amongst us — peace, I say; it is unnecessary to prove thou canst keep new secrets by ripping up old ones. Come hither, look through the wicket to the stone bench on the shady side of the grand porch — tell me, old lad, what dost thou see there?'

'A man asleep,' said Ismail. 'By Heaven, I think, from what I can see by the moonlight, that it is one of those barbarians, one of those island dogs, whom the Emperor sets such store by!'

'And can thy fertile brain,' said the centurion, 'spin nothing out of his present situation tending towards our advantage?'

'Why, ay,' said Ismail; 'they have large pay, though they are not only barbarians, but pagan dogs, in comparison with us Moslems and Nazarenes. That fellow hath besotted himself with liquor, and hath not found his way home to his barracks in good time. He will be severely punished, unless we consent to admit him; and to prevail on us to do so, he must empty the contents of his girdle.'

'That, at least — that, at least,' answered the soldiers of the city watch, but carefully suppressing their voices, though they spoke in an eager tone.

'And is that all that you would make of such an opportunity?' said Harpax, scornfully. 'No — no, comrades. If this outlandish animal indeed escape us, he must at least leave his fleece behind. See you not the gleams from his head-piece and his cuirass? I presume these betoken substantial silver, though it may be of the thinnest. There lies the silver mine I spoke of, ready to enrich the dexterous hands who shall labour it.'

'But,' said timidly a young Greek, a companion of their watch lately enlisted in the corps, and unacquainted with their habits, 'still this barbarian, as you call him, is a soldier of the Emperor; and if we are convicted of depriving him of his arms, we shall be justly punished for a military crime.'

'Hear to a new Lycurgus come to teach us our duty!' said the centurion. 'Learn first, young man, that the metropolitan cohort never can commit a crime, and learn next, of course, that they can never be convicted of one. Suppose we found a straggling barbarian, a Varangian, like this slumberer, perhaps a Frank, or some other of these foreigners bearing unpronounceable names, while they dishonour us by putting on the arms and apparel of the real Roman soldier, are we, placed to defend an important post, to admit a man so suspicious within our postern, when the event may probably be to betray both the Golden Gate and the hearts of gold who guard it — to have the one seized and the throats of the others handsomely cut?'

'Keep him outside the gate, then,' replied the novice, 'if you think him so dangerous. For my part, I should not fear him, were he deprived of that huge double-edged axe, which gleams from under his cloak, having a more deadly glare than the comet which astrologers prophesy such strange things of.'

'Nay, then, we agree together,' answered Harpax, 'and you speak like a youth of modesty and sense; and I promise you the state will lose nothing in the despoiling of this same barbarian. Each of these savages hath a double set of accoutrements, the one wrought with gold, silver, inlaid work, and ivory, as becomes their duties in the prince's household; the other fashioned of triple steel, strong, weighty, and irresistible. Now, in taking from this suspicious character his silver helmet and cuirass, you reduce him to his proper weapons, and you will see him start up in arms fit for duty.'

'Yes,' said the novice; 'but I do not see that this reasoning

will do more than warrant our stripping the Varangian of his armour, to be afterwards heedfully returned to him on the morrow, if he prove a true man. How, I know not, but I had adopted some idea that it was to be confiscated for our joint behoof.'

'Unquestionably,' said Harpax; 'for such has been the rule of our watch ever since the days of the excellent centurion Sisyphus, in whose time it first was determined that all contraband commodities, or suspicious weapons, or the like, which were brought into the city during the night-watch, should be uniformly forfeited to the use of the soldiery of the guard; and where the Emperor finds the goods or arms unjustly seized, I hope he is rich enough to make it up to the sufferer.'

'But still — but still,' said Sebastes of Mitylene, the young Greek aforesaid, 'were the Emperor to discover ——'

'Ass!' replied Harpax, 'he cannot discover, if he had all the eyes of Argus's tail. Here are twelve of us, sworn, according to the rules of the watch, to abide in the same story. Here is a barbarian, who, if he remembers anything of the matter — which I greatly doubt, his choice of a lodging arguing his familiarity with the wine-pot — tells but a wild tale of losing his armour, which we, my masters (looking round to his companions), deny stoutly — I hope we have courage enough for that — and which party will be believed? The companions of the watch, surely!'

'Quite the contrary,' said Sebastes. 'I was born at a distance from hence; yet, even in the island of Mitylene, the rumour had reached me that the cavaliers of the city-guard of Constantinople were so accomplished in falsehood that the oath of a single barbarian would outweigh the Christian oath of the whole body, if Christian some of them are — for example, this dark man with a single tuft on his head.'

'And if it were even so,' said the centurion, with a gloomy and sinister look, 'there is another way of making the transaction a safe one.'

Sebastes, fixing his eye on his commander, moved his hand to the hilt of an Eastern poniard which he wore, as if to penetrate his exact meaning. The centurion nodded in acquiescence.

'Young as I am,' said Sebastes, 'I have been already a pirate five years at sea, and a robber three years now in the hills, and it is the first time I have seen or heard a man hesitate in such a case, to take the only part which is worth a brave man's while to resort to in a pressing affair.'

Harpax struck his hand into that of the soldier, as sharing his uncompromising sentiments; but when he spoke it was in a tremulous voice.

'How shall we deal with him?' said he to Sebastes, who, from the most raw recruit in the corps, had now risen to the highest place in his estimation.

'Anyhow,' returned the islander; 'I see bows here and shafts, and if no other person can use them ——'

'They are not,' said the centurion, 'the regular arms of our corps.'

'The fitter you to guard the gates of a city,' said the young soldier with a horse-laugh, which had something insulting in it. 'Well — be it so. I can shoot like a Scythian,' he proceeded: 'nod but with your head, one shaft shall crash among the splinters of his skull and his brains, the second shall quiver in his heart.'

'Bravo, my noble comrade!' said Harpax, in a tone of affected rapture, always lowering his voice, however, as respecting the slumbers of the Varangian. 'Such were the robbers of ancient days, the Diomedes, Corynetes, Synnes, Scyrons, Procrustes, whom it required demigods to bring to what was miscalled justice, and whose compeers and fellows will remain masters of the continent and the isles of Greece, until Hercules and Theseus shall again appear upon earth. Nevertheless, shoot not, my valiant Sebastes — draw not the bow, my invaluable Mitylenian: you may wound and not kill.'

'I am little wont to do so,' said Sebastes, again repeating the hoarse, chuckling, discordant laugh, which grated upon the ears of the centurion, though he could hardly tell the reason why it was so uncommonly unpleasant.

'If I look not about me,' was his internal reflection, 'we shall have two centurions of the watch instead of one. This Mitylenian, or be he who the devil will, is a bow's length beyond me. I must keep my eye on him.' He then spoke aloud, in a tone of authority. 'But come, young man, it is hard to discourage a young beginner. If you have been such a rover of wood and river as you tell us of, you know how to play the *sicarius:* there lies your object, drunk or asleep, we know not which — you will deal with him in either case.'

'Will you give me no odds to stab a stupified or drunken man, most noble centurion?' answered the Greek. 'You would perhaps love the commission yourself?' he continued, somewhat ironically.

'Do as you are directed, friend,' said Harpax, pointing to the turret staircase which led down from the battlement to the arched entrance underneath the porch.

'He has the true cat-like, stealthy pace,' half-muttered the centurion, as his sentinel descended to do such a crime as he was posted there to prevent. 'This cockerel's comb must be cut, or he will become king of the roost. But let us see if his hand be as resolute as his tongue; then we will consider what turn to give to the conclusion.'

As Harpax spoke between his teeth, and rather to himself than any of his companions, the Mitylenian emerged from under the archway, treading on tiptoe, yet swiftly, with an admirable mixture of silence and celerity. His poniard, drawn as he descended, gleamed in his hand, which was held a little [illegible] rest of his person, so as to conceal it. The assassin [illegible] less than an instant over the sleeper, as if to mark the [illegible] between the ill-fated silver corslet and the body which [illegible] as designed to protect, when, at the instant the blow was [illegible] ing to its descent, the Varangian started up at once, arrested the armed hand of the assassin, by striking it upwards with the head of his battle-axe; and, while he thus parried the intended stab, struck the Greek a blow heavier than Sebastes had ever learned at the *pancration*, which left him scarce the power to cry 'help' to his comrades on the battlements. They saw what had happened, however, and beheld the barbarian set his foot on their companion, and brandish high his formidable weapon, the whistling sound of which made the old arch ring ominously, while he paused an instant, with his weapon upheaved, ere he gave the finishing blow to his enemy. The warders made a bustle, as if some of them would descend to the assistance of Sebastes, without, however, appearing very eager to do so, when Harpax, in a rapid whisper, commanded them to stand fast.

'Each man to his place,' he said, 'happen what may. Yonder comes a captain of the guard; the secret is our own, if the savage has killed the Mitylenian, as I well trust, for he stirs neither hand nor foot. But if he lives, my comrades, make hard your faces as flint: he is but one man, we are twelve. We know nothing of his purpose, save that he went to see wherefore the barbarian slept so near the post.'

While the centurion thus bruited his purpose in busy insinuation to the companions of his watch, the stately figure of a tall soldier, richly armed, and presenting a lofty crest, which

glistened as he stept from the open moonlight into the shade of the vault, became visible beneath. A whisper passed among the warders on the top of the gate.

'Draw bolt, shut gate, come of the Mitylenian what will,' said the centurion: 'we are lost men if we own him. Here comes the chief of the Varangian axes, the Follower himself.'

'Well, Hereward,' said the officer who came last upon the scene, in a sort of *lingua franca*, generally used by the barbarians of the guard, 'hast thou caught a night-hawk?'

'Ay, by St. George!' answered the soldier; 'and yet, in my country, we would call him but a kite.'

'What is he?' said the leader.

'He will tell you that himself,' replied the Varangian, 'when I take my grasp from his windpipe.'

'Let him go, then,' said the officer.

The Englishman did as he was commanded. But, escaping as soon as he felt himself at liberty, with an alertness which could scarce have been anticipated, the Mitylenian rushed out at the arch, and, availing himself of the complicated ornaments which had originally graced the exterior of the gateway, he fled around buttress and projection, closely pursued by the Varangian, who, cumbered with his armour, was hardly a match in the course for the light-footed Grecian, as he dodged his pursuer from one skulking-place to another. The officer laughed heartily as the two figures, like shadows appearing, and disappearing as suddenly, held rapid flight and chase around the arch of Theodosius.

'By Hercules! it is Hector pursued round the walls of Ilion by Achilles,' said the officer; 'but my Pelides will scarce overtake the son of Priam. What, ho! goddess-born — son of the white-footed Thetis! But the allusion is lost on the poor savage. Halloo, Hereward! I say, stop — know thine own mo barbarous name.' These last words were muttered; then raising his voice, 'Do not outrun thy wind, good Hereward. Thou mayst have more occasion for breath to-night.'

'If it had been my leader's will,' answered the Varangian, coming back in sulky mood, and breathing like one who had been at the top of his speed, 'I would have had him as fast as ever greyhound held hare, ere I left off the chase. Were it not for this foolish armour, which encumbers without defending one, I would not have made two bounds without taking him by the throat.'

'As well as it is,' said the officer, who was, in fact, the

Acoulouthos, or Follower, so called because it was the duty of this highly-trusted officer of the Varangian Guards constantly to attend on the person of the Emperor. 'But let us now see by what means we are to regain our entrance through the gate; for if, as I suspect, it was one of those warders who was willing to have played thee a trick, his companions may not let us enter willingly.'

'And is it not,' said the Varangian, 'your valour's duty to probe this want of discipline to the bottom?'

'Hush thee here, my simple-minded savage! I have often told you, most ignorant Hereward, that the skulls of those who come from your cold and muddy Bœotia of the North are fitter to bear out twenty blows with a sledge-hammer than turn off one witty or ingenious idea. But follow me, Hereward, and although I am aware that showing the fine meshes of Grecian policy to the coarse eye of an unpractised barbarian like thee is much like casting pearls before swine, a thing forbidden in the Blessed Gospel, yet, as thou hast so good a heart and so trusty, as is scarce to be met with among my Varangians themselves, I care not if, while thou art in attendance on my person, I endeavour to indoctrinate thee in some of that policy by which I myself, the Follower, the chief of the Varangians, and therefore erected by their axes into the most valiant of the valiant, am content to guide myself, although every way qualified to bear me through the cross-currents of the court by main pull of oar and press of sail — a condescension in me, to do that by policy which no man in this imperial court, the chosen sphere of superior wits, could so well accomplish by open force as myself. What think'st thou, good savage?'

'I know,' answered the Varangian, who walked about a step and a half behind his leader, like an orderly of the present day behind his officer's shoulder, 'I should be sorry to trouble my head with what I could do by my hands at once.'

'Did I not say so?' replied the Follower, who had now for some minutes led the way from the Golden Gate, and was seen gliding along the outside of the moonlight walls, as if seeking an entrance elsewhere. 'Lo, such is the stuff of what you call your head is made! Your hands and arms are perfect Achitophels compared to it. Hearken to me, thou most ignorant of all animals — but, for that very reason, thou stoutest of confidants and bravest of soldiers — I will tell thee the very riddle of this night-work, and yet, even then, I doubt if thou canst understand me.'

'It is my present duty to try to comprehend your valour,' said the Varangian — 'I would say your policy, since you condescend to expound it to me. As for your valour,' he added, 'I should be unlucky if I did not think I understand its length and breadth already.'

The Greek general coloured a little, but replied, with unaltered voice, 'True, good Hereward. We have seen each other in battle.'

Hereward here could not suppress a short cough, which, to those grammarians of the day who were skilful in applying the use of accents, would have implied no peculiar eulogium on his officer's military bravery. Indeed, during their whole intercourse, the conversation of the general, in spite of his tone of affected importance and superiority, displayed an obvious respect for his companion, as one who, in many points of action, might, if brought to the test, prove a more effective soldier than himself. On the other hand, when the powerful Northern warrior replied, although it was with all observance of discipline and duty, yet the discussion might sometimes resemble that between an ignorant macaroni officer, before the Duke of York's reformation of the British army, and a steady sergeant of the regiment in which they both served. There was a consciousness of superiority, disguised by external respect, and half admitted by the leader.

'You will grant me, my simple friend,' continued the chief, in the same tone as before, 'in order to lead thee by a short passage into the deepest principle of policy which pervades this same court of Constantinople, that the favour of the Emperor (here the officer raised his casque, and the soldier made a semblance of doing so also), who — be the place where he puts his foot sacred! — is the vivifying principle of the sphere in which we live, as the sun itself is that of humanity ——'

'I have heard something like this said by our tribunes,' said the Varangian.

'It is their duty so to instruct you,' answered the leader; 'and I trust that the priests also, in their sphere, forget not to teach my Varangians their constant service to their emperor.'

'They do not omit it,' replied the soldier, 'though we of the exiles know our duty.'

'God forbid I should doubt it,' said the commander of the battle-axes. 'All I mean is to make thee understand, my dear Hereward, that as there are, though perhaps such do not exist

in thy dark and gloomy climate, a race of insects which are born in the first rays of the morning and expire with those of sunset, thence called by us *ephemeræ*, as enduring one day only, such is the case of a favourite at court, while enjoying the smiles of the Most Sacred Emperor. And happy is he whose favour, rising as the person of the sovereign emerges from the level space which extends around the throne, displays itself in the first imperial blaze of glory, and who, keeping his post during the meridian splendour of the crown, has only the fate to disappear and die with the last beam of imperial brightness.'

'Your valour,' said the islander, 'speaks higher language than my Northern wits are able to comprehend. Only, methinks, rather than part with life at the sunset, I would, since insect I must needs be, become a moth for two or three dark hours.'

'Such is the sordid desire of the vulgar, Hereward,' answered the Follower, with assumed superiority, 'who are contented to enjoy life, lacking distinction; whereas we, on the other hand — we of choicer quality, who form the nearest and innermost circle around the Imperial Alexius, in which he himself forms the central point, are watchful, to woman's jealousy, of the distribution of his favours, and omit no opportunity, whether by leaguing with or against each other, to recommend ourselves individually to the peculiar light of his countenance.'

'I think I comprehend what you mean,' said the guardsman; 'although as for living such a life of intrigue — but that matters not.'

'It does indeed matter not, my good Hereward,' said his officer, 'and thou art lucky in having no appetite for the life I have described. Yet have I seen barbarians rise high in the empire, and if they have not altogether the flexibility — the malleability, as it is called — that happy ductility which can give way to circumstances, I have yet known those of barbaric tribes, especially if bred up at court from their youth, who joined to a limited portion of this flexile quality enough of a certain tough durability of temper, which, if it does not excel in availing itself of opportunity, has no contemptible talent at creating it. But letting comparisons pass, it follows, from this emulation of glory — that is, of royal favour — amongst the servants of the imperial and most sacred court, that each is desirous of distinguishing himself by showing to the Emperor, not only that he fully understands the duties of his own employ-

ments, but that he is capable, in case of necessity, of discharging those of others.'

'I understand,' said the Saxon; 'and thence it happens that the under-ministers, soldiers, and assistants of the great crown-officers are perpetually engaged, not in aiding each other, but in acting as spies on their neighbours' actions?'

'Even so,' answered the commander; 'it is but few days since I had a disagreeable instance of it. Every one, however dull in the intellect, hath understood this much, that the great Protospathaire,[1] which title thou knowest signifies the general-in-chief of the forces of the empire, hath me at hatred, because I am the leader of those redoubtable Varangians, who enjoy, and well deserve, privileges exempting them from the absolute command which he possesses over all other corps of the army—an authority which becomes Nicanor, notwithstanding the victorious sound of his name, nearly as well as a war-saddle would become a bullock.'

'How!' said the Varangian, 'does the Protospathaire pretend to any authority over the noble exiles? By the red dragon, under which we will live and die, we will obey no man alive but Alexius Comnenus himself, and our own officers!'

'Rightly and bravely resolved,' said the leader; 'but, my good Hereward, let not your just indignation hurry you so far as to name the Most Sacred Emperor without raising your hand to your casque, and adding the epithets of his lofty rank.'

'I will raise my hand often enough and high enough,' said the Norseman, 'when the Emperor's service requires it.'

'I dare be sworn thou wilt,' said Achilles Tatius, the commander of the Varangian Imperial Body-Guard, who thought the time was unfavourable for distinguishing himself by insisting on that exact observance of etiquette which was one of his great pretensions to the name of a soldier. 'Yet, were it not for the constant vigilance of your leader, my child, the noble Varangians would be trode down, in the common mass of the army, with the heathen cohorts of Huns, Scythians, or those turbaned infidels the renegade Turks: and even for this is your commander here in peril, because he vindicates his axe-men as worthy of being prized above the paltry shafts of the Eastern tribes and the javelins of the Moors, which are only fit to be playthings for children.'

'You are exposed to no danger,' said the soldier, closing up

[1] Literally, the First Swordsman.

to Achilles in a confidential manner, 'from which these axes can protect you.'

'Do I not know it?' said Achilles. 'But it is to your arm alone that the Follower of his Most Sacred Majesty now entrusts his safety.'

'In aught that a soldier may do,' answered Hereward; 'make your own computation, and then reckon this single arm worth two against any man the Emperor has, not being of our own corps.'

'Listen, my brave friend,' continued Achilles. 'This Nicanor was daring enough to throw a reproach on our noble corps, accusing them — gods and goddesses! — of plundering in the field, and, yet more sacrilegious, of drinking the precious wine which was prepared for his Most Sacred Majesty's own blessed consumption. I, the sacred person of the Emperor being present, proceeded, as thou mayst well believe ——'

'To give him the lie in his audacious throat!' burst in the Varangian; 'named a place of meeting somewhere in the vicinity, and called the attendance of your poor follower, Hereward of Hampton, who is your bond-slave for life long, for such an honour! I wish only you had told me to get my work day arms; but, however, I have my battle-axe, and ——' Here his companion seized a moment to break in, for he was somewhat abashed at the lively tone of the young soldier.

'Hush thee, my son,' said Achilles Tatius — 'speak low, my excellent Hereward. Thou mistakest this thing. With thee by my side, I would not, indeed, hesitate to meet five such as Nicanor; but such is not the law of this most hallowed empire, nor the sentiments of the three times illustrious prince who now rules it. Thou art debauched, my soldier, with the swaggering stories of the Franks, of whom we hear more and more every day.'

'I would not willingly borrow anything from those whom you call Franks, and we Normans,' answered the Varangian, in a disappointed, dogged tone.

'Why, listen, then,' said the officer, as they proceeded on their walk — 'listen to the reason of the thing, and consider whether such a custom can obtain, as that which they term the duello, in any country of civilisation and common sense, to say nothing of one which is blessed with the domination of the most rare Alexius Comnenus. Two great lords, or high officers, quarrel in the court, and before the reverend person of the Emperor. They dispute about a point of fact. Now,

instead of each maintaining his own opinion, by argument or evidence, suppose they had adopted the custom of these barbarous Franks — "Why, thou liest in thy throat," says the one; "And thou liest in thy very lungs," says another; and they measure forth the lists of battle in the next meadow. Each swears to the truth of his quarrel, though probably neither well knows precisely how the fact stands. One, perhaps the hardier, truer, and better man of the two, the Follower of the Emperor, and father of the Varangians — for death, my faithful follower, spares no man — lies dead on the ground, and the other comes back to predominate in the court, where, had the matter been inquired into by the rules of common sense and reason, the victor, as he is termed, would have been sent to the gallows. And yet this is the law of arms, as your fancy pleases to call it, friend Hereward!'

'May it please your valour,' answered the barbarian, 'there is a show of sense in what you say; but you will sooner convince me that this blessed moonlight is the blackness of a wolf's mouth than that I ought to hear myself called liar without cramming the epithet down the speaker's throat with the spike of my battle-axe. The lie is to a man the same as a blow, and a blow degrades him into a slave and a beast of burden, if endured without retaliation.'

'Ay, there it is!' said Achilles; 'could I but get you to lay aside that inborn barbarism, which leads you, otherwise the most disciplined soldiers who serve the Sacred Emperor, into such deadly quarrels and feuds ——'

'Sir captain,' said the Varangian, in a sullen tone, 'take my advice, and take the Varangians as you have them; for, believe my word that, if you could teach them to endure reproaches, bear the lie, or tolerate stripes, you would hardly find them, when their discipline is completed, worth the single day's salt which they cost to his Holiness, if that be his title. I must tell you, moreover, valorous sir, that the Varangians will little thank their leader, who heard them called marauders, drunkards, and what not, and repelled not the charge on the spot.'

'Now, if I knew not the humours of my barbarians,' thought Tatius, in his own mind, 'I should bring on myself a quarrel with these untamed islanders, who the Emperor thinks can be so easily kept in discipline. But I will settle this sport presently.' Accordingly, he addressed the Saxon in a soothing tone.

'My faithful soldier,' he proceeded aloud, 'we Romans,

according to the custom of our ancestors, set as much glory on actually telling the truth as you do in resenting the imputation of falsehood; and I could not with honour return a charge of falsehood upon Nicanor, since what he said was substantially true.'

'What! that we Varangians were plunderers, drunkards, and the like?' said Hereward, more impatient than before.

'No, surely, not in that broad sense,' said Achilles; 'but there was too much foundation for the legend.'

'When and where?' asked the Anglo-Saxon.

'You remember,' replied his leader, 'the long march near Laodicea, where the Varangians beat off a cloud of Turks, and retook a train of the imperial baggage? You know what was done that day — how you quenched your thirst, I mean?'

'I have some reason to remember it,' said Hereward of Hampton; 'for we were half choked with dust, fatigue, and, which was worst of all, constantly fighting with our faces to the rear, when we found some firkins of wine in certain carriages which were broken down; down our throats it went, as if it had been the best ale in Southampton.'

'Ah, unhappy!' said the Follower; 'saw you not that the firkins were stamped with the thrice excellent grand butler's own inviolable seal, and set apart for the private use of his Imperial Majesty's most sacred lips?'

'By good St. George of Merry England, worth a dozen of your St. George of Cappadocia, I neither thought nor cared about the matter,' answered Hereward. 'And I know your valour drank a mighty draught yourself out of my head-piece; not this silver bauble, but my steel-cap, which is twice as ample. By the same token, that whereas before you were giving orders to fall back, you were a changed man when you had cleared your throat of the dust, and cried, "Bide the other brunt, my brave and stout boys of Britain!"'

'Ay,' said Achilles, 'I know I am but too apt to be venturous in action. But you mistake, good Hereward: the wine I tasted in the extremity of martial fatigue was not that set apart for his Sacred Majesty's own peculiar mouth, but a secondary sort, preserved for the grand butler himself, of which, as one of the great officers of the household, I might right lawfully partake; the chance was nevertheless sinfully unhappy'

'On my life,' replied Hereward, 'I cannot see the infelicity of drinking when we are dying of thirst.'

'But cheer up, my noble comrade,' said Achilles, after he had hurried over his own exculpation, and without noticing the Varangian's light estimation of the crime, 'his Imperial Majesty, in his ineffable graciousness, imputes these ill-advised draughts as a crime to no one who partook of them. He rebuked the Protospathaire for fishing up this accusation, and said, when he had recalled the bustle and confusion of that toilsome day, "I thought myself well off amid that seven times heated furnace when we obtained a draught of the barley-wine drank by my poor Varangians; and I drank their health, as well I might, since, had it not been for their services, I had drunk my last; and well fare their hearts, though they quaffed my wine in return!" And with that he turned off, as one who said, "I have too much of this, being a finding of matter and ripping up of stories against Achilles Tatius and his gallant Varangians."'

'Now, may God bless his honest heart for it!' said Hereward, with more downright heartiness than formal respect. 'I'll drink to his health in what I put next to my lips that quenches thirst, whether it be ale, wine, or ditch-water.'

'Why, well said, but speak not above thy breath, and remember to put thy hand to thy forehead when naming, or even thinking of, the Emperor. Well, thou knowest, Hereward, that, having thus obtained the advantage, I knew that the moment of a repulsed attack is always that of a successful charge; and so I brought against the Protospathaire, Nicanor, the robberies which have been committed at the Golden Gate, and other entrances of the city, where a merchant was but of late kidnapped and murdered, having on him certain jewels, the property of the Patriarch.'

'Ay! indeed?' said the Varangian; 'and what said Alex—— I mean the Most Sacred Emperor, when he heard such things said of the city warders, though he had himself given, as we say in our land, the fox the geese to keep?'

'It may be he did,' replied Achilles; 'but he is a sovereign of deep policy, and was resolved not to proceed against these treacherous warders, or their general, the Protospathaire, without decisive proof. His Sacred Majesty, therefore, charged me to obtain specific circumstantial proof by thy means.'

'And that I would have managed in two minutes, had you not called me off the chase of yon cut-throat vagabond. But his Grace knows the word of a Varangian, and I can assure him that either lucre of my silver gaberdine, which they nickname a cuirass, or the hatred of my corps, would be sufficient to

incite any of these knaves to cut the throat of a Varangian, who appeared to be asleep. So we go, I suppose, captain, to bear evidence before the Emperor to this night's work?'

'No, my active soldier, hadst thou taken the runaway villain, my first act must have been to set him free again: and my present charge to you is, to forget that such an adventure has ever taken place.'

'Ha!' said the Varangian; 'this is a change of policy indeed!'

'Why, yes, brave Hereward; ere I left the palace this night, the Patriarch made overtures of reconciliation betwixt me and the Protospathaire, which, as our agreement is of much consequence to the state, I could not very well reject, either as a good soldier or a good Christian. All offences to my honour are to be in the fullest degree repaid, for which the Patriarch interposes his warrant. The Emperor, who will rather wink hard than see disagreements, loves better the matter should be slurred over thus.'

'And the reproaches upon the Varangians——' said Hereward.

'Shall be fully retracted and atoned for,' answered Achilles 'and a weighty donative in gold dealt among the corps of the Anglo-Danish axe-men. Thou, my Hereward, mayst be distributor; and thus, if well managed, mayst plate thy battle axe with gold.'

'I love my axe better as it is,' said the Varangian. 'My father bore it against the robber Normans at Hastings. Steel instead of gold for my money.'

'Thou mayst make thy choice, Hereward,' answered his officer; 'only, if thou art poor, say the fault was thine own.'

But here, in the course of their circuit round Constantinople, the officer and his soldier came to a very small wicket or sally port, opening on the interior of a large and massive advanced work, which terminated an entrance to the city itself. Here the officer halted, and made his obedience, as a devotee who is about to enter a chapel of peculiar sanctity.

CHAPTER III

Here, youth, thy foot unbrace,
  Here, youth, thy brow unbraid,
Each tribute that may grace
  The threshold here be paid.
Walk with the stealthy pace
  Which Nature teaches deer,
When, echoing in the chase,
  The hunter's horn they hear.

The Court.

BEFORE entering, Achilles Tatius made various gesticulations, which were imitated roughly and awkwardly by the unpractised Varangian, whose service with his corps had been almost entirely in the field, his routine of duty not having, till very lately, called him to serve as one of the garrison of Constantinople. He was not, therefore, acquainted with the minute observances which the Greeks, who were the most formal and ceremonious soldiers and courtiers in the world, rendered not merely to the Greek emperor in person, but throughout the sphere which peculiarly partook of his influence.

Achilles, having gesticulated after his own fashion, at length touched the door with a rap, distinct at once and modest. This was thrice repeated, when the captain whispered to his attendant, 'The interior! — for thy life, do as thou seest me do.' At the same moment he started back, and stooping his head on his breast, with his hands over his eyes, as if to save them from being dazzled by an expected burst of light, awaited the answer to his summons. The Anglo-Dane, desirous to obey his leader, imitating him as near as he could, stood side by side in the posture of Oriental humiliation. The little portal opened inwards, when no burst of light was seen, but four of the Varangians were made visible in the entrance, holding each his battle-axe, as if about to strike down the intruders who had disturbed the silence of their watch.

'Acouloufhos,' said the leader, by way of password.

'Tatius and Acoulouthos,' murmured the warders, as a countersign.

Each sentinel sunk his weapon.

Achilles then reared his stately crest, with a conscious dignity at making this display of court influence in the eyes of his soldiers. Hereward observed an undisturbed gravity, to the surprise of his officer, who marvelled in his own mind how he could be such a barbarian as to regard with apathy a scene which had in his eyes the most impressive and peculiar awe. This indifference he imputed to the stupid insensibility of his companion.

They passed on between the sentinels, who wheeled backward in file, on each side of the portal, and gave the strangers entrance to a long narrow plank, stretched across the city moat, which was here drawn within the inclosure of an external rampart, projecting beyond the principal wall of the city.

'This,' he whispered to Hereward, 'is called the Bridge of Peril, and it is said that it has been occasionally smeared with oil, or strewed with dried peas, and that the bodies of men, known to have been in company with the Emperor's most sacred person, have been taken out of the Golden Horn,[1] into which the moat empties itself.'

'I would not have thought,' said the islander, raising his voice to its usual rough tone, 'that Alexius Comnenus ——

'Hush, rash and regardless of your life!' said Achilles Tatius; 'to awaken the daughter of the imperial arch[2] is to incur deep penalty at all times, but when a rash delinquent has disturbed her with reflections on his Most Sacred Highness the Emperor, death is a punishment far too light for the effrontery which has interrupted her blessed slumber. Ill hath been my fate, to have positive commands laid on me, enjoining me to bring into the sacred precincts a creature who hath no more of the salt of civilisation in him than to keep his mortal frame from corruption, since of all mental culture he is totally incapable. Consider thyself, Hereward, and bethink thee what thou art, — by nature a poor barbarian thy best boast that thou hast slain certain Mussulmans in thy sacred master's quarrel; and here art thou admitted into the inviolable inclosure of the Blacquernal, and in the hearing not only of the royal daughter of the imperial arch, which means,' said

[1] The harbour of Constantinople.

[2] The 'daughter of the arch' was a courtly expression for the echo, as we find explained by the courtly commander himself

the eloquent leader, 'the echo of the sublime vaults, but — Heaven be our guide! — for what I know, within the natural hearing of the sacred ear itself!'

'Well, my captain,' replied the Varangian, 'I cannot presume to speak my mind after the fashion of this place; but I can easily suppose I am but ill qualified to converse in the presence of the court, nor do I mean therefore to say a word till I am spoken to, unless when I shall see no better company than ourselves. To be plain, I find difficulty in modelling my voice to a smoother tone than nature has given it: so, henceforth, my brave captain, I will be mute, unless when you give me a sign to speak.'

'You will act wisely,' said the captain. 'Here be certain persons of high rank, nay, some that have been born in the purple itself, that will, Hereward — alas, for thee! — prepare to sound with the line of their courtly understanding the depths of thy barbarous and shallow conceit. Do not, therefore, then, join their graceful smiles with thy inhuman bursts of cachinnation, with which thou art wont to thunder forth when opening in chorus with thy messmates.'

'I tell thee I will be silent,' said the Varangian, moved somewhat beyond his mood. 'If you trust my word, so; if you think I am a jackdaw that must be speaking, whether in or out of place and purpose, I am contented to go back again, and therein we can end the matter.'

Achilles, conscious perhaps that it was his best policy not to drive his subaltern to extremity, lowered his tone somewhat in reply to the uncourtly note of the soldier, as if allowing something for the rude manners of one whom he considered as not easily matched among the Varangians themselves for strength and valour — qualities which, in despite of Hereward's discourtesy, Achilles suspected in his heart were fully more valuable than all those nameless graces which a more courtly and accomplished soldier might possess.

The expert navigator of the intricacies of the imperial residence carried the Varangian through two or three small complicated courts, forming a part of the extensive palace of the Blacquernal,[1] and entered the building itself by a side-door, watched in like manner by a sentinel of the Varangian Guard, whom they passed on being recognised. In the next apartment was stationed the Court of Guard, where were certain soldiers of the same corps amusing themselves at games somewhat

[1] This palace derived its name from the neighbouring Blachernian gate and road.

resembling the modern draughts and dice, while they seasoned their pastime with frequent applications to deep flagons of ale, which were furnished to them while passing away their hours of duty. Some glances passed between Hereward and his comrades, and he would have joined them, or at least spoke to them; for, since the adventure of the Mitylenian, Hereward had rather thought himself annoyed than distinguished by his moonlight ramble in the company of his commander, excepting always the short and interesting period during which he conceived they were on the way to fight a duel. Still, however negligent in the strict observance of the ceremonies of the sacred palace, the Varangians had, in their own way, rigid notions of calculating their military duty; in consequence of which, Hereward, without speaking to his companions, followed his leader through the guard-room, and one or two antechambers adjacent, the splendid and luxurious furniture of which convinced him that he could be nowhere else save in the sacred residence of his master the Emperor.

At length, having traversed passages and apartments with which the captain seemed familiar, and which he threaded with a stealthy, silent, and apparently a reverential, pace, as if, in his own inflated phrase, afraid to awaken the sonorous echoes of those lofty and monumental halls, another species of inhabitants began to be visible. In different entrances, and in different apartments, the Northern soldier beheld those unfortunate slaves, chiefly of African descent, raised occasionally under the emperors of Greece to great power and honour, who, in that respect, imitated one of the most barbarous points of Oriental despotism. These slaves were differently occupied — some standing, as if on guard, at gates or in passages, with their drawn sabres in their hands; some were sitting in the Oriental fashion, on carpets, reposing themselves, or playing at various games, all of a character profoundly silent. Not a word passed between the guide of Hereward and the withered and deformed beings whom they thus encountered. The exchange of a glance with the principal soldier seemed all that was necessary to ensure both an uninterrupted passage.

After making their way through several apartments, empty or thus occupied, they at length entered one of black marble, or some other dark-coloured stone, much loftier and longer than the rest. Side passages opened into it, so far as the islander could discern, descending from several portals in the wall: but as the oils and gums with which the lamps in these passages

scarcely diffused a dim vapour around, it was difficult to ascertain, from the imperfect light, either the shape of the hall or the style of its architecture. At the upper and lower ends of the chamber there was a stronger and clearer light. It was when they were in the middle of this huge and long apartment that Achilles said to the soldier, in the sort of cautionary whisper which he appeared to have substituted in place of his natural voice since he had crossed the Bridge of Peril —

'Remain here till I return, and stir from this hall on no account.'

'To hear is to obey,' answered the Varangian, an expression of obedience which, like many other phrases and fashions, the empire, which still affected the name of Roman, had borrowed from the barbarians of the East. Achilles Tatius then hastened up the steps which led to one of the side-doors of the hall, which being slightly pressed, its noiseless hinge gave way and admitted him.

Left alone to amuse himself as he best could, within the limits permitted to him, the Varangian visited in succession both ends of the hall, where the objects were more visible than elsewhere. The lower end had in its centre a small low-browed door of iron. Over it was displayed the Greek crucifix in bronze, and around and on every side the representation of shackles, fetter-bolts, and the like were also executed in bronze, and disposed as appropriate ornaments over the entrance. The door of the dark archway was half open, and Hereward naturally looked in, the orders of his chief not prohibiting his satisfying his curiosity thus far. A dense red light, more like a distant spark than a lamp, affixed to the wall of what seemed a very narrow and winding stair, resembling in shape and size a draw-well, the verge of which opened on the threshold of the iron door, showed a descent which seemed to conduct to the infernal regions. The Varangian, however obtuse he might be considered by the quick-witted Greeks, had no difficulty in comprehending that a staircase having such a gloomy appearance, and the access to which was by a portal decorated in such a melancholy style of architecture, could only lead to the dungeons of the imperial palace, the size and complicated number of which were neither the least remarkable nor the least awe-imposing portion of the sacred edifice. Listening profoundly, he even thought he caught such accents as befit those graves of living men, the faint echoing of groans and sighs, sounding as it were from the deep abyss beneath. But in this respect

his fancy probably filled up the sketch which his conjectures bodied out.

'I have done nothing,' he thought, 'to merit being immured in one of these subterranean dens. Surely, though my captain, Achilles Tatius, is, under favour, little better than an ass, he cannot be so false of word as to train me to prison under false pretexts? I trow he shall first see for the last time how the English axe plays, if such is to be the sport of the evening. But let us see the upper end of this enormous vault; it may bear a better omen.'

Thus thinking, and not quite ruling the tramp of his armed footstep according to the ceremonies of the place, the large-limbed Saxon strode to the upper end of the black marble hall. The ornament of the portal here was a small altar, like those in the temples of the heathen deities, which projected above the centre of the arch. On this altar smoked incense of some sort, the fumes of which rose curling in a thin cloud to the roof, and thence extending through the hall, enveloped in its column of smoke a singular emblem, of which the Varangian could make nothing. It was the representation of two human arms and hands, seeming to issue from the wall, having the palms extended and open, as about to confer some boon on those who approached the altar. These arms were formed of bronze, and, being placed farther back than the altar with its incense, were seen through the curling smoke by lamps so disposed as to illuminate the whole archway. 'The meaning of this,' thought the simple barbarian, 'I should well know how to explain were these fists clenched, and were the hall dedicated to the *pancration*, which we call boxing; but as even these helpless Greeks use not their hands without their fingers being closed, by St. George, I can make out nothing of their meaning.'

At this instant Achilles entered the black marble hall at the same door by which he had left it, and came up to his neophyte, as the Varangian might be termed.

'Come with me now, Hereward, for here approaches the thick of the onset. Now display the utmost courage that thou canst summon up, for, believe me, thy credit and name also depend on it.'

'Fear nothing for either,' said Hereward, 'if the heart or hand of one man can bear him through the adventure by the help of a toy like this.'

'Keep thy voice low and submissive, I have told thee a

score of times,' said the leader, 'and lower thine axe, which, as I bethink me, thou hadst better leave in the outer apartment.'

'With your leave, noble captain,' replied Hereward, 'I am unwilling to lay aside my bread-winner. I am one of those awkward clowns who cannot behave seemly unless I have something to occupy my hands, and my faithful battle-axe comes most natural to me.'

'Keep it then; but remember thou dash it not about according to thy custom, nor bellow, nor shout, nor cry as in a battle-field; think of the sacred character of the place, which exaggerates riot into blasphemy, and remember the persons whom thou mayst chance to see, an offence to some of whom, it may be, ranks in the same sense with blasphemy against Heaven itself.'

This lecture carried the tutor and the pupil so far as to the side-door, and thence inducted them into a species of ante-room, from which Achilles led his Varangian forward, until a pair of folding-doors, opening into what proved to be a principal apartment of the palace, exhibited to the rough-hewn native of the North a sight equally new and surprising.

It was an apartment of the palace of the Blacquernal, dedicated to the special service of the beloved daughter of the Emperor Alexius, the Princess Anna Comnena, known to our times by her literary talents, which record the history of her father's reign. She was seated, the queen and sovereign of a literary circle, such as an imperial princess *porphyrogenita*, or born in the sacred purple chamber itself, could assemble in those days, and a glance around will enable us to form an idea of her guests, or companions.

The literary princess herself had the bright eyes, straight features, and comely and pleasing manners which all would have allowed to the Emperor's daughter, even if she could not have been, with severe truth, said to have possessed them. She was placed upon a small bench or sofa, the fair sex here not being permitted to recline, as was the fashion of the Roman ladies. A table before her was loaded with books, plants, herbs, and drawings. She sat on a slight elevation, and those who enjoyed the intimacy of the Princess, or to whom she wished to speak in particular, were allowed, during such sublime colloquy, to rest their knees on the little dais or elevated place where her chair found its station, in a posture half standing, half kneeling. Three other seats, of different heights,

were placed on the dais, and under the same canopy of state which overshadowed that of the Princess Anna.

The first, which strictly resembled her own chair in size and convenience, was one designed for her husband, Nicephorus Briennius. He was said to entertain or affect the greatest respect for his wife's erudition, though the courtiers were of opinion he would have liked to absent himself from her evening parties more frequently than was particularly agreeable to the Princess Anna and her imperial parents. This was partly explained by the private tattle of the court, which averred that the Princess Anna Comnena had been more beautiful when she was less learned, and that, though still a fine woman, she had somewhat lost the charms of her person as she became enriched in her mind.

To atone for the lowly fashion of the seat of Nicephorus Briennius, it was placed as near to his princess as it could possibly be edged by the ushers, so that she might not lose one look of her handsome spouse, nor he the least particle of wisdom which might drop from the lips of his erudite consort.

Two other seats of honour, or rather thrones — for they had footstools placed for the support of the feet, rests for the arms, and embroidered pillows for the comfort of the back, not to mention the glories of the outspreading canopy — were destined for the imperial couple, who frequently attended their daughter's studies, which she prosecuted in public in the way we have intimated. On such occasions, the Empress Irene enjoyed the triumph peculiar to the mother of an accomplished daughter, while Alexius, as it might happen, sometimes listened with complacence to the rehearsal of his own exploits in the inflated language of the Princess, and sometimes mildly nodded over her dialogues upon the mysteries of philosophy with the Patriarch Zosimus and other sages.

All these four distinguished seats for the persons of the imperial family were occupied at the moment which we have described, excepting that which ought to have been filled by Nicephorus Briennius, the husband of the fair Anna Comnena. To his negligence and absence was perhaps owing the angry spot on the brow of his fair bride. Beside her on the platform were two white-robed nymphs of her household — female slaves, in a word — who reposed themselves on their knees on cushions, when their assistance was not wanted as a species of living book-desks, to support and extend the parchment rolls in which the Princess recorded her own wisdom, or from which

she quoted that of others. One of these young maidens, called Astarte, was so distinguished as a calligrapher, or beautiful writer of various alphabets and languages, that she narrowly escaped being sent as a present to the Caliph (who could neither read nor write), at a time when it was necessary to bribe him into peace. Violante, usually called the Muse, the other attendant of the Princess, a mistress of the vocal and instrumental art of music, was actually sent in a compliment to soothe the temper of Robert Guiscard, the Archduke of Apulia, who, being aged and stone-deaf, and the girl under ten years old at the time, returned the valued present to the imperial donor, and, with the selfishness which was one of that wily Norman's characteristics, desired to have some one sent him who could contribute to his pleasure, instead of a twangling, squalling infant.

Beneath these elevated seats there sat, or reposed on the floor of the hall, such favourites as were admitted. The Patriarch Zosimus, and one or two old men, were permitted the use of certain lowly stools, which were the only seats prepared for the learned members of the Princess's evening parties, as they would have been called in our days. As for the younger magnates, the honour of being permitted to join the imperial conversation was expected to render them far superior to the paltry accommodation of a joint-stool. Five or six courtiers, of different dress and ages, might compose the party, who either stood, or relieved their posture by kneeling, along the verge of an adorned fountain, which shed a mist of such very small rain as to dispel almost insensibly, cooling the fragrant breeze which breathed from the flowers and shrubs, that were so disposed as to send a waste of sweets around. One goodly old man, named Michael Agelastes, big, burly, and dressed like an ancient Cynic philosopher, was distinguished by assuming, in a great measure, the ragged garb and mad bearing of that sect, and by his inflexible practice of the strictest ceremonies exigible by the imperial family. He was known by an affectation of cynical principle and language, and of republican philosophy, strangely contradicted by his practical deference to the great. It was wonderful how long this man, now sixty [seventy] years old and upwards, disdained to avail himself of the accustomed privilege of leaning or supporting his limbs, and with what regularity he maintained either the standing posture or that of absolute kneeling; but the first was so much his usual attitude, that he acquired among his court friends the name of

Elephas, or the Elephant, because the ancients had an idea that the half-reasoning animal, as it is called, has joints incapable of kneeling down.

'Yet I have seen them kneel when I was in the country of the Gymnosophists,' said a person present on the evening of Hereward's introduction.

'To take up their master on their shoulders? so will ours,' said the Patriarch Zosimus, with the slight sneer which was the nearest advance to a sarcasm that the etiquette of the Greek court permitted; for on all ordinary occasions it would not have offended the presence more surely literally to have drawn a poniard than to exchange a repartee in the imperial circle. Even the sarcasm, such as it was, would have been thought censurable by that ceremonious court in any but the Patriarch, to whose high rank some license was allowed.

Just as he had thus far offended decorum, Achilles Tatius and his soldier Hereward entered the apartment. The former bore him with even more than his usual degree of courtliness, as if to set his own good-breeding off by a comparison with the inexpert bearing of his follower; while, nevertheless, he had a secret pride in exhibiting, as one under his own immediate and distinct command, a man whom he was accustomed to consider as one of the finest soldiers in the army of Alexius, whether appearance or reality were to be considered.

Some astonishment followed the abrupt entrance of the new-comers. Achilles indeed glided into the presence with the easy and quiet extremity of respect which intimated his habitude in these regions. But Hereward started on his entrance, and, perceiving himself in company of the court, hastily strove to remedy his disorder. His commander, throwing round a scarce visible shrug of apology, made then a confidential and monitory sign to Hereward to mind his conduct. What he meant was, that he should doff his helmet and fall prostrate on the ground. But the Anglo-Saxon, unaccustomed to interpret obscure inferences, naturally thought of his military duties, and advanced in front of the Emperor, as when he rendered his military homage. He made reverence with his knee, half touched his cap, and then recovering and shouldering his axe, stood in advance of the imperial chair, as if on duty as a sentinel.

A gentle smile of surprise went round the circle as they gazed on the manly appearance, and somewhat unceremonious, but martial, deportment of the Northern soldier. The various spectators around consulted the Emperor's face, not knowing

whether they were to take the intrusive manner of the Varangian's entrance as matter of ill-breeding, and manifest their horror, or whether they ought rather to consider the bearing of the life-guardsman as indicating blunt and manly zeal, and therefore to be received with applause.

It was some little time ere the Emperor recovered himself sufficiently to strike a key-note, as was usual upon such occasions. Alexius Comnenus had been wrapt for a moment into some species of slumber, or at least absence of mind. Out of this he had been startled by the sudden appearance of the Varangian; for, though he was accustomed to commit the outer guards of the palace to this trusty corps, yet the deformed blacks whom we have mentioned, and who sometimes rose to be ministers of state and commanders of armies, were, on all ordinary occasions, entrusted with the guard of the interior of the palace. Alexius, therefore, awakened from his slumber, and the military phrase of his daughter still ringing in his ears, as she was reading a description of the great historical work in which she had detailed the conflicts of his reign, felt somewhat unprepared for the entrance and military deportment of one of the Saxon guard, with whom he was accustomed to associate, in general, scenes of blows, danger, and death.

After a troubled glance around, his look rested on Achilles Tatius. 'Why here,' he said, 'trusty Follower? why this soldier here at this time of night?' Here, of course, was the moment for modelling the visages *regis ad exemplum*; but, ere the Patriarch could frame his countenance into devout apprehension of danger, Achilles Tatius had spoken a word or two, which reminded Alexius's memory that the soldier had been brought there by his own special orders. 'Oh, ay! true, good fellow,' said he, smoothing his troubled brow; 'we had forgot that passage among the cares of state.' He then spoke to the Varangian with a countenance more frank, and a heartier accent, than he used to his courtiers; for, to a despotic monarch, a faithful life-guardsman is a person of confidence, while an officer of high rank is always in some degree a subject of distrust. 'Ha!' said he, 'our worthy Anglo-Dane, how fares he?' This unceremonious salutation surprised all but him to whom it was addressed. Hereward answered, accompanying his words with a military obeisance which partook of heartiness rather than reverence, with a loud unsubdued voice, which startled the presence still more that the language was Saxon, which these foreigners occasionally used, '*Waes hael, Kaisar*

mirrig und machtigh!' — that is, 'Be of good health, stout and mighty Emperor.' The Emperor, with a smile of intelligence, to show he could speak to his guards in their own foreign language, replied by the well-known counter-signal — '*Drinc hael!*'

Immediately a page brought a silver goblet of wine. The Emperor put his lips to it, though he scarce tasted the liquor, then commanded it to be handed to Hereward, and bade the soldier drink. The Saxon did not wait till he was desired a second time, but took off the contents without hesitation. A gentle smile, decorous as the presence required, passed over the assembly at a feat which, though by no means wonderful in a hyperborean, seemed prodigious in the estimation of the moderate Greeks. Alexius himself laughed more loudly than his courtiers thought might be becoming on their part, and mustering what few words of Varangian he possessed, which he eked out with Greek, demanded of his life-guardsman — 'Well, my bold Briton, or Edward, as men call thee, dost thou know the flavour of that wine?'

'Yes,' answered the Varangian, without change of countenance, 'I tasted it once before at Laodicea ——'

Here his officer, Achilles Tatius, became sensible that his soldier approached delicate ground, and in vain endeavoured to gain his attention, in order that he might furtively convey to him a hint to be silent, or at least take heed what he said in such a presence. But the soldier, who, with proper military observance, continued to have his eye and attention fixed on the Emperor, as the prince whom he was bound to answer or to serve, saw none of the hints, which Achilles at length suffered to become so broad, that Zosimus and the Protospathaire exchanged expressive glances, as calling on each other to notice the bye-play of the leader of the Varangians.

In the meanwhile, the dialogue between the Emperor and his soldier continued: — 'How,' said Alexius, 'did this draught relish, compared with the former?'

'There is fairer company here, my liege, than that of the Arabian archers,' answered Hereward, with a look and bow of instinctive good-breeding. 'Nevertheless, there lacks the flavour which the heat of the sun, the dust of the combat, with the fatigue of wielding such a weapon as this (advancing his axe for eight hours together, give to a cup of rare wine.'

'Another deficiency there might be,' said Agelastes the Elephant, 'provided I am pardoned hinting at it,' he added,

with a look to the throne: 'it might be the smaller size of the cup compared with that at Laodicea.'

'By Taranis, you say true,' answered the life-guardsman; 'at Laodicea I used my helmet.'

'Let us see the cups compared together, good friend,' said Agelastes, continuing his raillery, 'that we may be sure thou hast not swallowed the present goblet; for I thought, from the manner of the draught, there was a chance of its going down with its contents.'

'There are some things which I do not easily swallow,' answered the Varangian, in a calm and indifferent tone; 'but they must come from a younger and more active man than you.'

The company again smiled to each other, as if to hint that the philosopher, though also parcel wit by profession, had the worst of the encounter.

The Emperor at the same time interfered — 'Nor did I send for thee hither, good fellow, to be baited by idle taunts.'

Here Agelastes shrunk back in the circle, as a hound that has been rebuked by the huntsman for babbling; and the Princess Anna Comnena, who had indicated by her fair features a certain degree of impatience, at length spoke — 'Will it then please you, my imperial and much beloved father, to inform those blessed with admission to the Muses' temple for what it is that you have ordered this soldier to be this night admitted to a place so far above his rank in life? Permit me to say, we ought not to waste, in frivolous and silly jests, the time which is sacred to the welfare of the empire, as every moment of your leisure must be.'

'Our daughter speaks wisely,' said the Empress Irene, who, like most mothers who do not possess much talent themselves, and are not very capable of estimating it in others, was, nevertheless, a great admirer of her favourite daughter's accomplishments, and ready to draw them out on all occasions. 'Permit me to remark, that in this divine and selected palace of the Muses, dedicated to the studies of our well-beloved and highly-gifted daughter, whose pen will preserve your reputation, our most imperial husband, till the desolation of the universe, and which enlivens and delights this society, the very flower of the wits of our sublime court — permit me to say, that we have, merely by admitting a single life-guardsman, given our conversation the character of that which distinguishes a barrack.'

Now the Emperor Alexius Comnenus had the same feeling with many an honest man in ordinary life when his wife begins

a long oration, especially as the Empress Irene did not always retain the observance consistent with his awful rule and right supremacy, although especially severe in exacting it from all others in reference to her lord. Therefore, though he had felt some pleasure in gaining a short release from the monotonous recitation of the Princess's history, he now saw the necessity of resuming it, or of listening to the matrimonial eloquence of the Empress. He sighed, therefore, as he said, 'I crave your pardon, good our imperial spouse, and our daughter born in the purple chamber. I remember me, our most amiable and accomplished daughter, that last night you wished to know the particulars of the battle of Laodicea with the heathenish Arabs, whom Heaven confound. And for certain considerations which moved ourselves to add other inquiries to our own recollection, Achilles Tatius, our most trusty Follower, was commissioned to introduce into this place one of those soldiers under his command, being such a one whose courage and presence of mind could best enable him to remark what passed around him on that remarkable and bloody day. And this I suppose to be the man brought to us for that purpose.'

'If I am permitted to speak and live,' answered the Follower, 'your Imperial Highness, with those divine Princesses, whose name is to us as those of blessed saints, have in your presence the flower of my Anglo-Danes, or whatsoever unbaptised name is given to my soldiers. He is, as I may say, a barbarian of barbarians; for although in birth and breeding unfit to soil with his feet the carpet of this precinct of accomplishment and eloquence, he is so brave, so trusty, so devotedly attached, and so unhesitatingly zealous, that ——'

'Enough, good Follower,' said the Emperor; 'let us only know that he is cool and observant, not confused and fluttered during close battle, as we have sometimes observed in you and other great commanders, and, to speak truth, have even felt in our imperial self on extraordinary occasions; which difference in man's constitution is not owing to any inferiority of courage, but, in us, to a certain consciousness of the importance of our own safety to the welfare of the whole, and to a feeling of the number of duties which at once devolve on us. Speak then, and speak quickly, Tatius; for I discern that our dearest consort, and our thrice fortunate daughter born in the imperial chamber of purple, seem to wax somewhat impatient.'

'Hereward,' answered Tatius, 'is as composed and observant in battle as another in a festive dance. The dust of war is the

breath of his nostrils; and he will prove his worth in combat against any four others, Varangians excepted, who shall term themselves your Imperial Highness's bravest servants.'

'Follower,' said the Emperor, with a displeased look and tone, 'instead of instructing these poor, ignorant barbarians in the rules and civilisation of our enlightened empire, you foster, by such boastful words, the idle pride and fury of their temper, which hurries them into brawls with the legions of other foreign countries, and even breeds quarrels among themselves.'

'If my mouth may be opened in the way of most humble excuse,' said the Follower, 'I would presume to reply, that I but an hour hence [since] talked with this poor ignorant Anglo-Dane on the paternal care with which the Imperial Majesty of Greece regards the preservation of that concord which unites the followers of his standard, and how desirous he is to promote that harmony, more especially amongst the various nations who have the happiness to serve you, in spite of the bloodthirsty quarrels of the Franks and other Northern men, who are never free from civil broil. I think the poor youth's understanding can bear witness to this much in my behalf.' He then looked towards Hereward, who gravely inclined his head in token of assent to what his captain said. His excuse thus ratified, Achilles proceeded in his apology more firmly. 'What I have said even now was spoken without consideration: for, instead of pretending that this Hereward would face four of your Imperial Highness's servants, I ought to have said that he was willing to defy six of your Imperial Majesty's most deadly *enemies*, and permit them to choose every circumstance of time, arms, and place of combat.'

'That hath a better sound,' said the Emperor; 'and in truth, for the information of my dearest daughter, who piously has undertaken to record the things which I have been the blessed means of doing for the empire, I earnestly wish that she should remember, that though the sword of Alexius hath not slept in its sheath, yet he hath never sought his own aggrandisement of fame at the price of bloodshed among his subjects.'

'I trust,' said Anna Comnena, 'that, in my humble sketch of the life of the princely sire from whom I derive my existence, I have not forgot to notice his love of peace, and care for the lives of his soldiery, and abhorrence of the bloody manners of the heretic Franks, as one of his most distinguishing characteristics.'

Assuming then an attitude more commanding, as one who was about to claim the attention of the company, the Princess inclined her head gently around to the audience, and taking a roll of parchment from the fair amanuensis, which she had, in a most beautiful handwriting, engrossed to her mistress's dictation, Anna Comnena prepared to read its contents.

At this moment, the eyes of the Princess rested for an instant on the barbarian Hereward, to whom she deigned this greeting

'Valiant barbarian, of whom my fancy recalls some memory, as if in a dream, thou art now to hear a work which, if the author be put into comparison with the subject, might be likened to a portrait of Alexander, in executing which some inferior drawer has usurped the pencil of Apelles; but which essay, however it may appear unworthy of the subject in the eyes of many, must yet command some envy in those who candidly consider its contents, and the difficulty of portraying the great personage concerning whom it is written. Still, I pray thee, give thine attention to what I have now to read, since this account of the battle of Laodicea, the details thereof being principally derived from his Imperial Highness, my excellent father, from the altogether valiant Protospathaire, his invincible general, together with Achilles Tatius, the faithful Follower of our victorious Emperor, may nevertheless be in some circumstances inaccurate. For it is to be thought, that the high offices of those great commanders retained them at a distance from some particularly active parts of the fray, in order that they might have more cool and accurate opportunity to form a judgment upon the whole, and transmit their orders, without being disturbed by any thoughts of personal safety. Even so, brave barbarian, in the art of embroidery — marvel not that we are a proficient in that mechanical process, since it is patronised by Minerva, whose studies we affect to follow — we reserve to ourselves the superintendence of the entire web, and commit to our maidens and others the execution of particular parts. Thus, in the same manner, thou, valiant Varangian, being engaged in the very thickest of the affray before Laodicea, mayst point out to us, the unworthy historian of so renowned a war, those chances which befell where men fought hand to hand, and where the fate of war was decided by the edge of the sword. Therefore, dread not, thou bravest of the axe men to whom we owe that victory, and so many others, to correct any mistake or misapprehension which we may have been led into concerning the details of that glorious event.'

'Madam,' said the Varangian, 'I shall attend with diligence to what your Highness may be pleased to read to me; although, as to presuming to blame the history of a princess born in the purple, far be such a presumption from me; still less would it become a barbaric Varangian to pass a judgment on the military conduct of the Emperor, by whom he is liberally paid, or of the commander, by whom he is well treated. Before an action, if our advice is required, it is ever faithfully tendered; but, according to my rough wit, our censure after the field is fought would be more invidious than useful. Touching the Protospathaire, if it be the duty of a general to absent himself from close action, I can safely say, or swear, were it necessary, that the invincible commander was never seen by me within a javelin's cast of aught that looked like danger.'

This speech, boldly and bluntly delivered, had a general effect on the company present. The Emperor himself and Achilles Tatius looked like men who had got off from a danger better than they expected. The Protospathaire laboured to conceal a movement of resentment. Agelastes whispered to the Patriarch, near whom he was placed, 'The Northern battle-axe lacks neither point nor edge.'

'Hush!' said Zosimus, 'let us hear how this is to end: the Princess is about to speak.'

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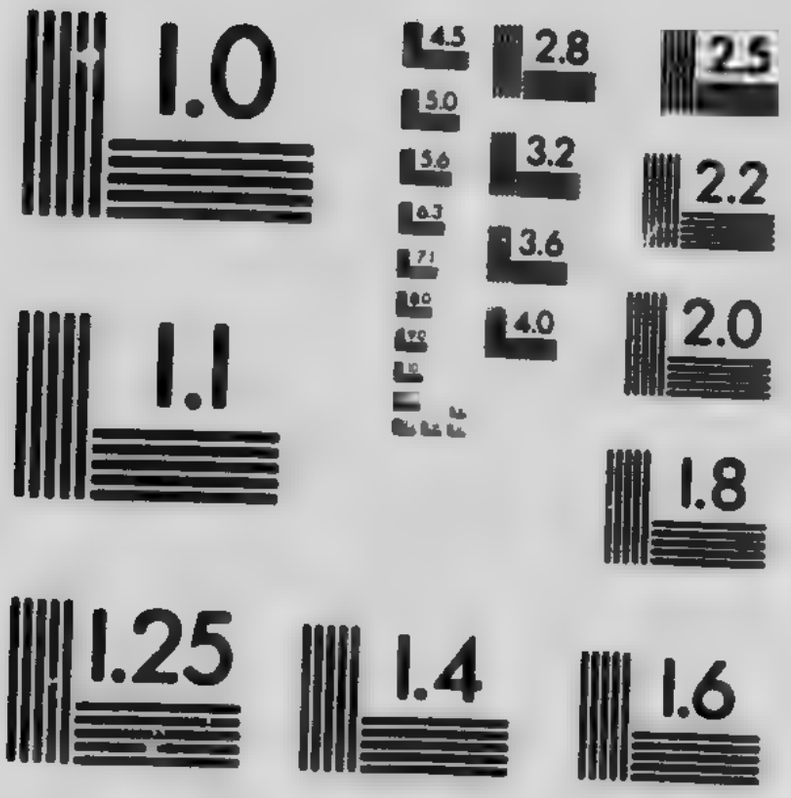

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CHAPTER IV

We heard the tecbir, so these Arabs call
Their shout of onset, when with loud acclaim
They challenged Heaven, as if demanding conquest.
The battle join'd, and, through the barb'rous herd,
'Fight — fight!' and 'Paradise!' was all their cry.

The Siege of Damascus.

THE voice of the Northern soldier, although modified by feelings of respect to the Emperor, and even attachment to his captain, had more of a tone of blunt sincerity, nevertheless, than was usually heard by the sacred echoes of the imperial palace; and though the Princess Anna Comnena began to think that she had invoked the opinion of a severe judge, she was sensible, at the same time, by the deference of his manner, that his respect was of a character more real, and his applause, should she gain it, would prove more truly flattering, than the gilded assent of the whole court of her father. She gazed with some surprise and attention on Hereward, already described as a very handsome young man, and felt the natural desire to please which is easily created in the mind towards a fine person of the other sex. His attitude was easy and bold, but neither clownish nor uncourtly. His title of a barbarian placed him at once free from the forms of civilised life and the rules of artificial politeness. But his character for valour, and the noble self-confidence of his bearing, gave him a deeper interest than would have been acquired by a more studied and anxious address, or an excess of reverential awe.

In short, the Princess Anna Comnena, high in rank as she was, and born in the imperial purple, which she herself deemed the first of all attributes, felt herself, nevertheless, in preparing to resume the recitation of her history, more anxious to obtain the approbation of this rude soldier than that of all the rest of the courteous audience. She knew them well, it is true, and felt nowise solicitous about the applause which the daughter of

the Emperor was sure to receive with full hands from those of the Grecian court to whom she might choose to communicate the productions of her father's daughter. But she had now a judge of a new character, whose applause, if bestowed, must have something in it intrinsically real, since it could only be obtained by affecting his head or his heart.

It was perhaps under the influence of these feelings that the Princess was somewhat longer than usual in finding out the passage in the roll of history at which she purposed to commence. It was also noticed that she began her recitation with a diffidence and embarrassment surprising to the noble hearers, who had often seen her in full possession of her presence of mind before what they conceived a more distinguished, and even more critical, audience.

Neither were the circumstances of the Varangian such as rendered the scene indifferent to him. Anna Comnena had indeed attained her fifth lustre, and that is a period after which Grecian beauty is understood to commence its decline. How long she had passed that critical period was a secret to all but the trusted ward-women of the purple chamber. Enough, that it was affirmed by the popular tongue, and seemed to be attested by that bent towards philosophy and literature, which is not supposed to be congenial to beauty in its earlier buds, to amount to one or two years more. She might be seven-and-twenty.

Still Anna Comnena was, or had very lately been, a beauty of the very first rank, and must be supposed to have still retained charms to captivate a barbarian of the North; if, indeed, he himself was not careful to maintain an heedful recollection of the immeasurable distance between them. Indeed, even this recollection might hardly have saved Hereward from the charms of this enchantress, bold, free-born, and fearless as he was; for, during that time of strange revolutions, there were many instances of successful generals sharing the couch of imperial princesses, whom perhaps they had themselves rendered widows, in order to make way for their own pretensions. But, besides the influence of other recollections, which the reader may learn hereafter, Hereward, though flattered by the unusual degree of attention which the Princess bestowed upon him, saw in her only the daughter of his Emperor and adopted liege lord, and the wife of a noble prince, whom reason and duty alike forbade him to think of in any other light.

It was after one or two preliminary efforts that the Princess

Anna began her reading, with an uncertain voice, which gained strength and fortitude as she proceeded with the following passage from a well-known part of her history of Alexius Comnenus, but which unfortunately has not been republished in the Byzantine historians. The narrative cannot, therefore, be otherwise than acceptable to the antiquarian reader; and the Author hopes to receive the thanks of the learned world for the recovery of a curious fragment, which, without his exertions, must probably have passed to the gulf of total oblivion.

THE RETREAT OF LAODICEA,

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE GREEK OF THE PRINCESS COMNENA'S HISTORY OF HER FATHER

'The sun had betaken himself to his bed in the ocean, ashamed, it would seem, to see the immortal army of our Most Sacred Emperor Alexius surrounded by those barbarous hordes of unbelieving barbarians who, as described in our last chapter, had occupied the various passes both in front and rear of the Romans,[1] secured during the preceding night by the wily barbarians. Although, therefore, a triumphant course of advance had brought us to this point, it now became a serious and doubtful question whether our victorious eagles might be able to penetrate any farther into the country of the enemy, or even to retreat with safety into their own.

'The extensive acquaintance of the Emperor with military affairs, in which he exceeds most living princes, had induced him, on the preceding evening, to ascertain, with marvellous exactitude and foresight, the precise position of the enemy. In this most necessary service he employed certain light-armed barbarians, whose habits and discipline had been originally derived from the wilds of Syria; and, if I am required to speak according to the dictation of truth, seeing she ought always to sit upon the pen of a historian, I must needs say they were infidels like their enemies; faithfully attached, however, to the Roman service, and, as I believe, true slaves of the Emperor, to whom they communicated the information required by him respecting the position of his dreaded opponent Jezdegerd.

[1] More properly termed Greeks; but we follow the phraseology of the fair authoress.

These men did not bring in their information [illegible] long after the hour when the Emperor usually betook himself to rest.

'Notwithstanding this derangement of his most sacred time, our imperial father, who had postponed the ceremony of disrobing, so important were the necessities of the moment, continued, until deep in the night, to hold a council of his wisest chiefs, men whose depth of judgment might have saved a sinking world, and who now consulted what was to be done under the pressure of the circumstances in which they were now placed. And so great was the urgency, that all ordinary observances of the household were set aside, since I have heard from those who witnessed the fact, that the royal bed was displayed in the very room where the council assembled, and that the sacred lamp, called the Light of the Council, and which always burns when the Emperor presides in person over the deliberations of his servants, was for that night — a thing unknown in our annals — fed with unperfumed oil!!'

The fair speaker here threw her fine form into an attitude which expressed holy horror, and the hearers intimated their sympathy in the exciting cause by corresponding signs of interest; as to which we need only say, that the sigh of Achilles Tatius was the most pathetic; while the groan of Agelastes the Elephant was deepest and most tremendously bestial in its sound. Hereward seemed little moved, except by a slight motion of surprise at the wonder expressed by the others. The Princess, having allowed due time for the sympathy of her hearers to exhibit itself, proceeded as follows: —

'In this melancholy situation, when even the best-established and most sacred rites of the imperial household gave way to the necessity of a hasty provision for the morrow, the opinions of the counsellors were different, according to their tempers and habits — a thing, by the way, which may be remarked as likely to happen among the best and wisest on such occasions of doubt and danger.

'I do not in this place put down the names and opinions of those whose counsels were proposed and rejected, herein paying respect to the secrecy and freedom of debate justly attached to the imperial cabinet. Enough it is to say, that some there were who advised a speedy attack upon the enemy, in the direction of our original advance. Others thought it was safer, and might be easier, to force our way to the rear, and retreat by the same course which had brought us hither; nor must it be concealed that there were persons of unsuspected fidelity

who proposed a third course, safer indeed than the others, but totally alien to the mind of our most magnanimous father. They recommended that a confidential slave, in company with a minister of the interior of our imperial palace, should be sent to the tent of Jezdegerd, in order to ascertain upon what terms the barbarian would permit our triumphant father to retreat in safety at the head of his victorious army. On learning such opinion, our imperial father was heard to exclaim, "Sancta Sophia!" being the nearest approach to an adjuration which he has been known to permit himself, and was apparently about to say something violent both concerning the dishonour of the advice and the cowardice of those by whom it was preferred, when, recollecting the mutability of human things, and the misfortune of several of his Majesty's gracious predecessors, some of whom had been compelled to surrender their sacred persons to the infidels in the same region, his Imperial Majesty repressed his generous feelings, and only suffered his army counsellors to understand his sentiments by a speech, in which he declared so desperate and so dishonourable a course would be the last which he would adopt even in the last extremity of danger. Thus did the judgment of this mighty prince at once reject counsel that seemed shameful to his arms, and thereby encourage the zeal of his troops, while privately he kept this postern in reserve, which in utmost need might serve for a safe, though not altogether, in less urgent circumstances, an honourable, retreat.

'When the discussion had reached this melancholy crisis, the renowned Achilles Tatius arrived with the hopeful intelligence that he himself and some soldiers of his corps had discovered an opening on the left flank of our present encampment, by which, making, indeed, a considerable circuit, but reaching, if we marched with vigour, the town of Laodicea, we might, by falling back on our resources, be in some measure in surety from the enemy.

'So soon as this ray of hope darted on the troubled mind of our gracious father, he proceeded to make such arrangements as might secure the full benefit of the advantage. His Imperial Highness would not permit the brave Varangians, whose battle-axes he accounted the flower of his imperial army, to take the advanced post of assailants on the present occasion. He repressed the love of battle by which these generous foreigners have been at all times distinguished, and directed that the Syrian forces in the army, who have been before mentioned, should be assembled with as little noise as

possible in the vicinity of the deserted pass, with instructions to occupy it. The good genius of the empire suggested that, as their speech, arms, and appearance resembled those of the enemy, they might be permitted unopposed to take post in the defile with their light-armed forces, and thus secure it for the passage of the rest of the army, of which he proposed that the Varangians, as immediately attached to his own sacred person, should form the vanguard. The well-known battalions termed the Immortals[1] came next, comprising the gross of the army, and forming the centre and rear. Achilles Tatius, the faithful Follower of his royal master, although mortified that he was not permitted to assume the charge of the rear, which he had proposed for himself and his valiant troops, as the post of danger at the time, cheerfully acquiesced, nevertheless, in the arrangement proposed by the Emperor, as most fit to effect the imperial safety, and that of the army.

'The imperial orders, as they were sent instantly abroad, were in like manner executed with the readiest punctuality, the rather that they indicated a course of safety which had been almost despaired of even by the oldest soldiers. During the dead period of time, when, as the divine Homer tells us, gods and men are alike asleep, it was found that the vigilance and prudence of a single individual had provided safety for the whole Roman army. The pinnacles of the mountain passes were scarcely touched by the earliest beams of the dawn, when these beams were also reflected from the steel caps and spears of the Syrians, under the command of a captain named Monastras, who, with his tribe, had attached himself to the empire. The Emperor, at the head of his faithful Varangians, defiled through the passes, in order to gain that degree of advance on the road to the city of Laodicea which was desired, so as to avoid coming into collision with the barbarians.

'It was a goodly sight to see the dark mass of Northern warriors, who now led the van of the army, moving slowly and steadily through the defiles of the mountains, around the insulated rocks and precipices, and surmounting the gentler acclivities, like the course of a strong and mighty river; while the loose bands of archers and javelin-men, armed after the Eastern manner, were dispersed on the steep sides of the defiles, and might be compared to light foam upon the edge of the torrent. In the midst of the squadrons of the life-guard might be seen the proud war-house of his Imperial Majesty, which

[1] See Note 4.

pawed the earth indignantly, as if impatient at the delay which separated him from his august burden. The Emperor Alexius himself travelled in a litter, borne by eight strong African slaves, that he might rise perfectly refreshed if the army should be overtaken by the enemy. The valiant Achilles Tatius rode near the couch of his master, that none of those luminous ideas by which our august sire so often decided the fate of battle might be lost for want of instant communication to those whose duty it was to execute them. I may also say, that there were close to the litter of the Emperor three or four carriages of the same kind; one prepared for the Moon, as she may be termed, of the universe, the gracious Empress Irene. Among the others which might be mentioned was that which contained the authoress of this history, unworthy as she may be of distinction, save as the daughter of the eminent and sacred persons whom the narration chiefly concerns. In this manner the imperial army pressed on through the dangerous defiles, where their march was exposed to insults from the barbarians. They were happily cleared without any opposition. When we came to the descent of the pass which looks down on the city of Laodicea, the sagacity of the Emperor commanded the van — which, though the soldiers composing the same were heavily armed, had hitherto marched extremely fast — to halt, as well that they themselves might take some repose and refreshment as to give the rearward forces time to come up, and close various gaps which the rapid movement of those in front had occasioned in the line of march.

'The place chosen for this purpose was eminently beautiful, from the small and comparatively insignificant ridge of hills which melt irregularly down into the plains stretching between the pass which we occupied and Laodicea. The town was about one hundred stadia distant, and some of our more sanguine warriors pretended that they could already discern its towers and pinnacles, glittering in the beams of the sun, which had not as yet risen high into the heavens. A mountain torrent, which found its source at the base of a huge rock, that yawned to give it birth, as if struck by the rod of the prophet Moses, poured its liquid treasure down to the more level country, nourishing herbage, and even large trees, in its descent, until, at the distance of some four or five miles, the stream, at least in dry seasons, was lost amid heaps of sand and stones, which in the rainy season marked the strength and fury of its current.

'It was pleasant to see the attention of the Emperor to the

comforts of the companions and guardians of his march. The trumpets from time to time gave license to various parties of the Varangians to lay down their arms, to eat the food which was distributed to them, and quench their thirst at the pure stream, which poured its bounties down the hill, or they might be seen to extend their bulky forms upon the turf around them. The Emperor, his most serene spouse, and the princesses and ladies were also served with breakfast, at the fountain formed by the small brook in its very birth, and which the reverent feelings of the soldiers had left unpolluted by vulgar touch, for the use of that family emphatically said to be born in the purple. Our beloved husband was also present on this occasion, and was among the first to detect one of the disasters of the day. For, although all the rest of the repast had been, by the dexterity of the officers of the imperial mouth, so arranged, even on so awful an occasion, as to exhibit little difference from the ordinary provisions of the household, yet, when his Imperial Highness called for wine, behold, not only was the sacred liquor dedicated to his own peculiar imperial use wholly exhausted or left behind, but, to use the language of Horace, not the vilest Sabine vintage could be procured; so that his Imperial Highness was glad to accept the offer of a rude Varangian, who proffered his modicum of decocted barley, which these barbarians prefer to the juice of the grape. The Emperor, nevertheless, accepted of this coarse tribute.'

'Insert,' said the Emperor, who had been hitherto either plunged in deep contemplation or in an incipient slumber—'insert, I say, these very words: "And with the heat of the morning, and anxiety of so rapid a march, with a numerous enemy in his rear, the Emperor was so thirsty as never in his life to think beverage more delicious."'

In obedience to her imperial father's orders, the Princess resigned the manuscript to the beautiful slave by whom it was written, repeating to the fair scribe the commanded addition, requiring her to note it as made by the express sacred command of the Emperor, and then proceeded thus: 'More I had said here respecting the favourite liquor of your Imperial Highness's faithful Varangians; but your Highness having once graced it with a word of commendation, this *ail*, as they call it, doubtless because removing all disorders, which they term "ailments," becomes a theme too lofty for the discussion of any inferior person. Suffice it to say, that thus were we all pleasantly engaged, the ladies and slaves trying to find some

amusement for the imperial ears; the soldiers, in a long line down the ravine, seen in different postures, some straggling to the watercourse, some keeping guard over the arms of their comrades, in which duty they relieved each other, while body after body of the remaining troops, under command of the Protospathaire, and particularly those called Immortals, joined the main army as they came up. Those soldiers who were already exhausted were allowed to take a short repose, after which they were sent forward, with directions to advance steadily on the road to Laodicea; while their leader was instructed, so soon as he should open a free communication with that city, to send thither a command for reinforcements and refreshments, not forgetting fitting provision of the sacred wine for the imperial mouth. Accordingly, the Roman bands of Immortals and others had resumed their march, and held some way on their journey, it being the imperial pleasure that the Varangians, lately the vanguard, should now form the rear of the whole army, so as to bring off in safety the Syrian light troops, by whom the hilly pass was still occupied, when we heard upon the other side of this defile, which we had traversed with so much safety, the awful sound of the *lelies*, as the Arabs name their shout of onset, though in what language it is expressed it would be hard to say. Perchance some in this audience may enlighten my ignorance?'

'May I speak and live?' said the Acoulouthos Achilles, proud of his literary knowledge, 'the words are, *Alla illa Alla; Mohammed resoul Alla.*[1] These, or something like them, contain the Arabs' profession of faith, which they always call out when they join battle; I have heard them many times.'

'And so have I,' said the Emperor; 'and as thou didst, I warrant me, I have sometimes wished myself anywhere else than within hearing.'

All around the circle were alive to hear the answer of Achilles Tatius. He was too good a courtier, however, to make any imprudent reply. 'It was my duty,' he replied, 'to desire to be as near your Imperial Highness as your faithful Follower ought, wherever you might wish yourself for the time.'

Agelastes and Zosimus exchanged looks; and the Princess Anna Comnena proceeded in her recitation.

'The cause of these ominous sounds, which came in wild confusion up the rocky pass, was soon explained to us by a dozen cavaliers, to whom the task of bringing intelligence had been assigned.

[1] *i. e.* 'God is God — Mahomet is the prophet of God.'

'These informed us that the barbarians, whose host had been dispersed around the position in which we had encamped the preceding day, had not been enabled to get their forces together until our light troops were evacuating the post they had occupied for securing the retreat of our army. They were then drawing off from the tops of the hills into the pass itself, when, in despite of the rocky ground, they were charged furiously by Jezdegerd, at the head of a large body of his followers, which, after repeated exertions, he had at length brought to operate on the rear of the Syrians. Notwithstanding that the pass was unfavourable for cavalry, the personal exertions of the infidel chief made his followers advance with a degree of resolution unknown to the Syrians of the Roman army, who, finding themselves at a distance from their companions, formed the injurious idea that they were left there to be sacrificed, and thought of flight in various directions rather than of a combined and resolute resistance. The state of affairs, therefore, at the further end of the pass, was less favourable than we could wish, and those whose curiosity desired to see something which might be termed the rout of the rear of an army beheld the Syrians pursued from the hill-tops, overwhelmed, and individually cut down and made prisoners by the bands of caitiff Mussulmen.

'His Imperial Highness looked upon the scene of battle for a few minutes, and, much commoved at what he saw, was somewhat hasty in his directions to the Varangians to resume their arms, and precipitate their march towards Laodicea; whereupon one of those Northern soldiers said boldly, though in opposition to the imperial command, "If we attempt to go hastily down this hill, our rear-guard will be confused, not only by our own hurry, but by these runaway scoundrels of Syrians, who in their headlong flight will not fail to mix themselves among our ranks. Let two hundred Varangians, who will live and die for the honour of England, abide in the very throat of this pass with me, while the rest escort the Emperor to this Laodicea, or whatever it is called. We may perish in our defence, but we shall die in our duty; and I have little doubt but we shall furnish such a meal as will stay the stomach of these yelping hounds from seeking any farther banquet this day."

'My imperial father at once discovered the importance of this advice, though it made him wellnigh weep to see with what unshrinking fidelity these poor barbarians pressed to fill

up the number of those who were to undertake this desperate duty, with what kindness they took leave of their comrades, and with what jovial shouts they followed their sovereign with their eyes as he proceeded on his march down the hill, leaving them behind to resist and perish. The imperial eyes were filled with tears; and I am not ashamed to confess that, amid the terror of the moment, the Empress, and I myself, forgot our rank in paying a similar tribute to these bold and self-devoted men.

'We left their leader carefully arraying his handful of comrades in defence of the pass, where the middle path was occupied by their centre, while their wings on either side were so disposed as to act upon the flanks of the enemy, should he rashly press upon such as appeared opposed to him in the road. We had not proceeded half way towards the plain when a dreadful shout arose, in which the yells of the Arabs were mingled with the deep and more regular shout which these strangers usually repeat thrice, as well when bidding hail to their commanders and princes as when in the act of engaging in battle. Many a look was turned back by their comrades, and many a form was seen in the ranks which might have claimed the chisel of a sculptor, while the soldier hesitated whether to follow the line of his duty, which called him to march forward with his Emperor, or the impulse of courage, which prompted him to rush back to join his companions. Discipline, however, prevailed, and the main body marched on.

'An hour had elapsed, during which we heard, from time to time, the noise of battle, when a mounted Varangian presented himself at the side of the Emperor's litter. The horse was covered with foam, and had obviously, from his trappings, the fineness of his limbs, and the smallness of his joints, been the charger of some chief of the desert, which had fallen by the chance of battle into the possession of the Northern warrior. The broad axe which the Varangian bore was also stained with blood, and the paleness of death itself was upon his countenance. These marks of recent battle were held sufficient to excuse the irregularity of his salutation, while he exclaimed "Noble prince, the Arabs are defeated, and you may pursue your march at more leisure."

'"Where is Jezdegerd?" said the Emperor, who had many reasons for dreading this celebrated chief.

'"Jezdegerd," continued the Varangian, "is where brave men are who fall in their duty."

'"And that is ——" said the Emperor, impatient to know distinctly the fate of so formidable an adversary.

'"Where I am now going," answered the faithful soldier, who dropped from his horse as he spoke, and expired at the feet of the litter-bearers.

'The Emperor called to his attendants to see that the body of this faithful retainer, to whom he destined an honourable sepulchre, was not left to the jackall or vulture; and so did his brethren, the Anglo-Saxons, among whom he was a man of no mean repute, raised the body on their shoulders, and resumed their march with this additional encumbrance, prepared to fight for their precious burden, like the valiant Menelaus for the body of Patroclus.'

The Princess Anna Comnena here naturally paused; for, having attained what she probably considered as the rounding of a period, she was willing to form an idea of the feelings of her audience. Indeed, but that she had been intent upon her own manuscript, the emotions of the foreign soldier must have more early attracted her attention. In the beginning of her recitation, he had retained the same attitude which he had at first assumed, stiff and rigid as a sentinel upon duty, and apparently remembering nothing, save that he was performing that duty in presence of the imperial court. As the narrative advanced, however, he appeared to take more interest in what was read. The anxious fears expressed by the various leaders in the midnight council he listened to with a smile of suppressed contempt, and he almost laughed at the praises bestowed upon the leader of his own corps, Achilles Tatius. Nor did even the name of the Emperor, though listened to respectfully, gain that applause for which his daughter fought so hard, and used so much exaggeration.

Hitherto the Varangian's countenance indicated very slightly any interior emotions; but they appeared to take a deeper hold on his mind as she came to the description of the halt after the main army had cleared the pass, the unexpected appearance of the Arabs, the retreat of the column which escorted the Emperor, and the account of the distant engagement. He felt, on hearing the narration of these events, the rigid and constrained look of a soldier, who listened to the history of his Emperor with the same feelings with which he would have mounted guard at his palace. His colour began to come and go, his eyes to fill and to sparkle, his limbs to become more agitated than their owner seemed to assent to, and his whole

appearance was changed into that of a listener highly interested by the recitation which he hears, and insensible, or forgetful, of whatever else is passing before him, as well as of the quality of those who are present.

As the historian proceeded, Hereward became less able to conceal his agitation; and at the moment the Princess looked round, his feelings became so acute that, forgetting where he was, he dropped his ponderous axe upon the floor, and, clasping his hands together, exclaimed, 'My unfortunate brother!'

All were startled by the clang of the falling weapon, and several persons at once attempted to interfere, as called upon to explain a circumstance so unusual. Achilles Tatius made some small progress in a speech designed to apologise for the rough mode of venting his sorrows to which Hereward had given way, by assuring the eminent persons present that the poor uncultivated barbarian was actually younger brother to him who had commanded and fallen at the memorable defile. The Princess said nothing, but was evidently struck and affected, and not ill-pleased, perhaps, at having given rise to feelings of interest so flattering to her as an authoress. The others, each in their character, uttered incoherent words of what was meant to be consolation; for distress which flows from a natural cause generally attracts sympathy even from the most artificial characters. The voice of Alexius silenced all these imperfect speakers. 'Ha, my brave soldier, Edward!' said the Emperor, 'I must have been blind that I did not sooner recognise thee, as I think there is a memorandum entered respecting five hundred pieces of gold due from us to Edward the Varangian; we have it in our secret scroll of such liberalities for which we stand indebted to our servitors, nor shall the payment be longer deferred.'

'Not to me, if it may please you, my liege,' said the Anglo-Dane, hastily composing his countenance into its rough gravity of lineament, 'lest it should be to one who can claim no interest in your imperial munificence. My name is Hereward; that of Edward is borne by three of my companions, all of them as likely as I to have deserved your Highness's reward for the faithful performance of their duty.'

Many a sign was made by Tatius in order to guard his soldier against the folly of declining the liberality of the Emperor.

Agelastes spoke more plainly. 'Young man,' he said, 'rejoice in an honour so unexpected, and answer henceforth to no other name save that of Edward, by which it hath

pleased the light of the world, as it poured a ray upon thee, to distinguish thee from other barbarians. What is to thee the font-stone, or the priest officiating thereat, shouldst thou have derived from either any epithet different from that by which it hath now pleased the Emperor to distinguish thee from the common mass of humanity, and by which proud distinction thou hast now a right to be known ever afterwards?'

'Hereward [Waltheoff] was the name of my father,' said the soldier, who had now altogether recovered his composure. 'I cannot abandon it while I honour his memory in death. Edward is the title of my comrade; I must not run the risk of usurping his interest.'

'Peace all!' interrupted the Emperor. 'If we have made a mistake, we are rich enough to right it; nor shall Hereward be the poorer, if an Edward shall be found to merit this gratuity.'

'Your Highness may trust that to your affectionate consort,' answered the Empress Irene.

'His Most Sacred Highness,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'is so avariciously desirous to do whatever is good and gracious, that he leaves no room even for his nearest connexions to display generosity or munificence. Nevertheless, I, in my degree, will testify my gratitude to this brave man; for where his exploits are mentioned in this history I will cause to be recorded, "This feat was done by Hereward the Anglo-Dane, whom it hath pleased his Imperial Majesty to call Edward." Keep this, good youth,' she continued, bestowing at the same time a ring of price, 'in token that we will not forget our engagement.'

Hereward accepted the token with a profound obeisance, and a discomposure which his station rendered not unbecoming. It was obvious to most persons present that the gratitude of the beautiful princess was expressed in a manner more acceptable to the youthful life-guardsman than that of Alexius Comnenus. He took the ring with great demonstration of thankfulness. 'Precious relic!' he said, as he saluted this pledge of esteem by pressing it to his lips; 'we may not remain long together, but be assured,' bending reverently to the Princess, 'that death alone shall part us.'

'Proceed, our princely daughter,' said the Empress Irene; 'you have done enough to show that valour is precious to her who can confer fame, whether it be found in a Roman or a barbarian.'

The Princess resumed her narrative with some slight appearance of embarrassment.

'Our movement upon Laodicea was now resumed, and continued with good hopes on the part of those engaged in the march. Yet instinctively we could not help casting our eyes to the rear, which had been so long the direction in which we feared attack. At length, to our surprise, a thick cloud of dust was visible on the descent of the hill, half-way betwixt us and the place at which we had halted. Some of the troops who composed our retreating body, particularly those in the rear, began to exclaim, "The Arabs — the Arabs!" and their march assumed a more precipitate character when they believed themselves pursued by the enemy. But the Varangian guards affirmed with one voice that the dust was raised by the remains of their own comrades, who, left in the defence of the pass, had marched off after having so valiantly maintained the station entrusted to them. They fortified their opinion by professional remarks that the cloud of dust was more concentrated than if raised by the Arab horse, and they even pretended to assert, from their knowledge of such cases, that the number of their comrades had been much diminished in the action. Some Syrian horsemen, despatched to reconnoitre the approaching body, brought intelligence corresponding with the opinion of the Varangians in every particular. The portion of the body-guard had beaten back the Arabs, and their gallant leader had slain their chief Jezdegerd, in which service he was mortally wounded, as this history hath already mentioned. The survivors of the detachment, diminished by one half, were now on their march to join the Emperor, as fast as the encumbrance of bearing their wounded to a place of safety would permit.

'The Emperor Alexius, with one of those brilliant and benevolent ideas which mark his paternal character towards his soldiers, ordered all the litters, even that for his own most sacred use, to be instantly sent back to relieve the bold Varangians of the task of bearing the wounded. The shouts of the Varangians' gratitude may be more easily conceived than described, when they beheld the Emperor himself descend from his litter, like an ordinary cavalier, and assume his war-horse, at the same time that the Most Sacred Empress, as well as the authoress of this history, with other princesses born in the purple, mounted upon mules, in order to proceed upon the march, while their litters were unhesitatingly assigned for the accommodation of the wounded men. This was indeed a mark as well of military sagacity as of humanity; for the relief afforded to the bearers of the wounded enabled the survivors

of those who had defended the defile at the fountain to join us sooner than would otherwise have been possible.

'It was an awful thing to see those men who had left us in the full splendour which military equipment gives to youth and strength again appearing in diminished numbers — their armour shattered, their shields full of arrows, their offensive weapons marked with blood, and they themselves exhibiting all the signs of desperate and recent battle. Nor was it less interesting to remark the meeting of the soldiers who had been engaged with the comrades whom they had rejoined. The Emperor, at the suggestion of the trusty Acoulouthos, permitted them a few moments to leave their ranks, and learn from each other the fate of the battle.

'As the two bands mingled, it seemed a meeting where grief and joy had a contest together. The most rugged of these barbarians — and I who saw it can bear witness to the fact — as he welcomed with a grasp of his strong hand some comrade whom he had given up for lost, had his large blue eyes filled with tears at hearing of the loss of some one whom he had hoped might have survived. Other veterans reviewed the standards which had been in the conflict, satisfied themselves that they had all been brought back in honour and safety, and counted the fresh arrow-shots with which they had been pierced, in addition to similar marks of former battles. All were loud in the praises of the brave young leader they had lost, nor were the acclamations less general in laud of him who had succeeded to the command, who brought up the party of his deceased brother, and whom,' said the Princess, in a few words which seemed apparently interpolated for the occasion, 'I now assure of the high honour and estimation in which he is held by the author of this history — that is, I would say, by every member of the imperial family — for his gallant services in such an important crisis.'

Having hurried over her tribute to her friend the Varangian, in which emotions mingled that are not willingly expressed before so many hearers, Anna Comnena proceeded with composure in the part of her history which was less personal.

'We had not much time to make more observations on what passed among those brave soldiers; for, a few minutes having been allowed to their feelings, the trumpet sounded the advance towards Laodicea, and we soon beheld the town, now about four miles from us, in fields which were chiefly covered with trees. Apparently the garrison had already some

notice of our approach, for carts and wains were seen advancing from the gates with refreshments, which the heat of the day, the length of the march, and columns of dust, as well as the want of water, had rendered of the last necessity to us. The soldiers joyfully mended their pace in order to meet the sooner with the supplies of which they stood so much in need. But as the cup doth not carry in all cases the liquid treasure to the lips for which it was intended, however much it may be longed for, what was our mortification to behold a cloud of Arabs issue at full gallop from the wooded plain betwixt the Roman army and the city, and throw themselves upon the waggons, slaying the drivers, and making havoc and spoil of the contents! This, we afterwards learned, was a body of the enemy, headed by Varanes, equal in military fame among those infidels to Jezdegerd, his slain brother. When this chieftain saw that it was probable that the Varangians would succeed in their desperate defence of the pass, he put himself at the head of a large body of cavalry; and, as these infidels are mounted on horses unmatched either in speed or wind, performed a long circuit, traversed the stony ridge of hills at a more northerly defile, and placed himself in ambuscade in the wooded plain I have mentioned, with the hope of making an unexpected assault upon the Emperor and his army, at the very time when they might be supposed to reckon upon an undisputed retreat. This surprise would certainly have taken place, and it is not easy to say what might have been the consequence, had not the unexpected appearance of the train of waggons awakened the unbridled rapacity of the Arabs, in spite of their commander's prudence and attempts to restrain them. In this manner the proposed ambuscade was discovered.

'But Varanes, willing still to gain some advantage from the rapidity of his movements, assembled as many of his horsemen as could be collected from the spoil, and pushed forward towards the Romans, who had stopt short on their march at so unlooked for an apparition. There was an uncertainty and wavering in our first ranks which made their hesitation known even to so poor a judge of military demeanour as myself. On the contrary, the Varangians joined in a unanimous cry of "Bills"[1] that is, in their language, battle-axes — "to the front!" and the Emperor's most gracious will acceding to their valorous desire, they pressed forward from the rear to the head of the column.

[1] Villehardouin says, 'Les Anglois et Danois mult bien combatroient avec leurs *haches*.'

I can hardly say how this manœuvre was executed, but it was doubtless by the wise directions of my most serene father, distinguished for his presence of mind upon such difficult occasions. It was, no doubt, much facilitated by the good-will of the troops themselves; the Roman bands, called the Immortals, showing, as it seemed to me, no less desire to fall into the rear than did the Varangians to occupy the places which the Immortals left vacant in front. The manœuvre was so happily executed that, before Varanes and his Arabs had arrived at the van of our troops, they found it occupied by the inflexible guard of Northern soldiers. I might have seen with my own eyes, and called upon them as sure evidences of that which chanced upon the occasion. But, to confess the truth, my eyes were little used to look upon such sights; for of Varanes's charge I only beheld, as it were, a thick cloud of dust rapidly driven forward, through which were seen the glittering points of lances, and the waving plumes of turbaned cavaliers imperfectly visible. The tecbir was so loudly uttered, that I was scarcely aware that kettledrums and brazen cymbals were sounding in concert with it. But this wild and outrageous storm was met as effectually as if encountered by a rock.

'The Varangians, unshaken by the furious charge of the Arabs, received horse and rider with a shower of blows from their massive battle-axes, which the bravest of the enemy could not face, nor the strongest endure. The guards strengthened their ranks also, by the hindmost pressing so close upon those that went before, after the manner of the ancient Macedonians, that the fine-limbed, though slight, steeds of these Idumeans could not make the least inroad upon the Northern phalanx. The bravest men, the most gallant horses, fell in the first rank. The weighty, though short, horse javelins, flung from the rear ranks of the brave Varangians with good aim and sturdy arm, completed the confusion of the assailants, who turned their back in affright and fled from the field in total confusion.

'The enemy thus repulsed, we proceeded on our march, and only halted when we recovered our half-plundered waggons. Here, also, some invidious remarks were made by certain officers of the interior of the household, who had been on duty over the stores, and, having fled from their posts on the assault of the infidels, had only returned upon their being repulsed. These men, quick in malice, though slow in perilous service, reported that, on this occasion, the Varangians so far forgot their duty as to consume a part of the sacred wine reserved for

the imperial lips alone. It would be criminal to deny that this was a great and culpable oversight; nevertheless, our imperial hero passed it over as a pardonable offence, remarking, in a jesting manner, that since he had drank the *ail*, as they termed it, of his trusty guard, the Varangians had acquired a right to quench the thirst and to relieve the fatigue which they had undergone that day in his defence, though they used for these purposes the sacred contents of the imperial cellar.

'In the meantime, the cavalry of the army were despatched in pursuit of the fugitive Arabs; and having succeeded in driving them behind the chain of hills which had so recently divided them from the Romans, the imperial arms might justly be considered as having obtained a complete and glorious victory.

'We are now to mention the rejoicings of the citizens of Laodicea, who, having witnessed from their ramparts, with alternate fear and hope, the fluctuations of the battle, now descended to congratulate the imperial conqueror.'

Here the fair narrator was interrupted. The principal entrance of the apartment flew open, noiselessly indeed, but with both folding leaves at once, not as if to accommodate the entrance of an ordinary courtier, studying to create as little disturbance as possible, but as if there was entering a person who ranked so high as to make it indifferent how much attention was drawn to his motions. It could only be one born in the purple, or nearly allied to it, to whom such freedom was lawful; and most of the guests, knowing who were likely to appear in that temple of the Muses, anticipated, from the degree of bustle, the arrival of Nicephorus Briennius, the son-in-law of Alexius Comnenus, the husband to the fair historian, and in the rank of Cæsar, which, however, did not at that period imply, as in early ages, the dignity of second person in the empire. The policy of Alexius had interposed more than one person of condition between the Cæsar and his original rights and rank, which had once been second to those only of the Emperor himself.

CHAPTER V

The storm increases: 't is no sunny shower,
Foster'd in the moist breast of March or April,
Or such as parched summer cools his lip with.
Heaven's windows are flung wide; the inmost deeps
Call in hoarse greeting one upon another;
On comes the flood in all its foaming horrors,
And where 's the dike shall stop it?[1]

The Deluge, a Poem.

THE distinguished individual who entered was a noble Grecian, of stately presence, whose habit was adorned with every mark of dignity, saving those which Alexius had declared sacred to the Emperor's own person and that of the Sebastocrator, whom he had established as next in rank to the head of the empire. Nicephorus Bry[illegible]ius, who was in the bloom of youth, retained all the marks of that manly beauty which had made the match acceptable to Anna Comnena; while political considerations, as the desire of attaching a powerful house as friendly adherents of the [illegible] united the union to the Emperor.

We have already hinted that the royal bride had, though in no great degree, the very doubtful advantage of years. Of her literary talents we have seen tokens. Yet it was not believed by those who best knew that, with the aid of those claims to respect, Anna Comnena was successful in possessing the unlimited attachment of her handsome husband. To treat her with apparent neglect her connexion with the crown rendered impossible; while, on the other hand, the power of Nicephorus's family was too great to permit his being dictated to even by the Emperor himself. He was possessed of talents, as it was believed, calculated both for war and peace. His advice was, therefore, listened to, and his assistance required, so that he claimed complete liberty with respect to his own time, which

[1] These lines were penned impromptu one wet afternoon in February 1831, while taking refuge in the late Mr. Cadell's house, Edinburgh (*Lang*).

he sometimes used with less regular attendance upon the temple of the Muses than the goddess of the place thought herself entitled to, or than the Empress Irene was disposed to exact on the part of her daughter. The good-humoured Alexius observed a sort of neutrality in this matter, and kept it as much as possible from becoming visible to the public, conscious that it required the whole united strength of his family to maintain his place in so agitated an empire.

He pressed his son-in-law's hand, as Nicephorus, passing his father-in-law's seat, bent his knee in token of homage. The constrained manner of the Empress indicated a more cold reception of her son-in-law, while the fair muse herself scarcely deigned to signify her attention to his arrival, when her handsome mate assumed the vacant seat by her side, which we have already made mention of.

There was an awkward pause, during which the imperial son-in-law, coldly received when he expected to be welcomed, attempted to enter into some light conversation with the fair slave Astarte, who knelt behind her mistress. This was interrupted by the Princess commanding her attendant to inclose the manuscript within its appropriate casket, and convey it with her own hands to the cabinet of Apollo, the usual scene of the Princess's studies, as the temple of the Muses was that commonly dedicated to her recitations.

The Emperor himself was the first to break an unpleasant silence. 'Fair son-in-law,' he said, 'though it now wears something late in the night, you will do yourself wrong if you permit our Anna to send away that volume, with which this company have been so delectably entertained that they may well say that the desert hath produced roses, and the barren rocks have poured forth milk and honey, so agreeable is the narrative of a toilsome and dangerous campaign in the language of our daughter.'

'The Cæsar,' said the Empress, 'seems to have little taste for such dainties as this family can produce. He hath of late repeatedly absented himself from this temple of the Muses, and found doubtless more agreeable conversation and amusement elsewhere.'

'I trust, madam,' said Nicephorus, 'that my taste may vindicate me from the charge implied. But it is natural that our sacred father should be most delighted with the milk and honey which is produced for his own special use.'

The Princess spoke in the tone of a handsome woman

offended by her lover, and feeling the offence, yet not indisposed to a reconciliation.

'If,' she said, 'the deeds of Nicephorus Briennius are less frequently celebrated in that poor roll of parchment than those of my illustrious father, he must do me the justice to remember that such was his own special request; either proceeding from that modesty which is justly ascribed to him as serving to soften and adorn his other attributes, or because he with justice distrusts his wife's power to compose their eulogium.'

'We will then summon back Astarte,' said the Empress, 'who cannot yet have carried her offering to the cabinet of Apollo.'

'With your imperial pleasure,' said Nicephorus, 'it might incense the Pythian god were a deposit to be recalled of which he alone can fitly estimate the value. I came hither to speak with the Emperor upon pressing affairs of state, and not to hold a literary conversation with a company which I must needs say is something of a miscellaneous description, since I behold an ordinary life-guardsman in the imperial circle.'

'By the rood, son-in-law,' said Alexius, 'you do this gallant man wrong. He is the brother of that brave Anglo-Dane who secured the victory at Laodicea by his valiant conduct and death; he himself is that Edmund — or Edward — or Hereward — to whom we are ever bound for securing the success of that victorious day. He was called into our presence, son-in-law, since it imports that you should know so much, to refresh the memory of my Follower, Achilles Tatius, as well as mine own, concerning some transactions of the day of which we had become in some degree oblivious.'

'Truly, imperial sir,' answered Briennius, 'I grieve that, by having intruded on such important researches, I may have, in some degree, intercepted a portion of that light which is to illuminate future ages. Methinks that in a battlefield, fought under your imperial guidance and that of your great captains, you evidence might well supersede the testimony of such a man as this. Let me know,' he added, turning haughtily to the Varangian, 'what particular thou canst add that is unnoticed in the Princess's narrative?'

The Varangian replied instantly, 'Only that, when we made a halt at the fountain, the music that was there made by the ladies of the Emperor's household, and particularly by those two whom I now behold, was the most exquisite that ever reached my ears.'

'Hah! darest thou to speak so audacious an opinion,' exclaimed Nicephorus. 'Is it for such as thou to suppose — for a moment that the music which the wife and daughter of the Emperor might condescend to make was intended to afford either matter of pleasure or of criticism to every plebeian barbarian who might hear them? Begone from this place! nor dare, on any pretext, again to appear before mine eyes — under allowance always of our imperial father's pleasure.'

The Varangian bent his looks upon Achilles Tatius, as the person from whom he was to take his orders to stay or withdraw. But the Emperor himself took up the subject with considerable dignity.

'Son,' he said, 'we cannot permit this. On account of some love quarrel, as it would seem, betwixt you and our daughter, you allow yourself strangely to forget our imperial rank, and to order from our presence those whom we have pleased to call to attend us. This is neither right nor seemly, nor is it our pleasure that this same Hereward — or Edward — or whatever be his name — either leave us at this present moment or do at any time hereafter regulate himself by any commands save our own, or those of our Follower, Achilles Tatius. And now, allowing this foolish affair, which I think was blown among us by the wind, to pass as it came, without farther notice, we crave to know the grave matters of state which brought you to our presence at so late an hour. You look again at this Varangian. Withhold not your words, I pray you, on account of his presence; for he stands as high in our trust, and we are convinced with as good reason, as any counsellor who has been sworn our domestic servant.'

'To hear is to obey,' returned the Emperor's son-in-law, who saw that Alexius was somewhat moved, and knew that in such cases it was neither safe nor expedient to drive him to extremity. 'What I have to say,' continued he, 'must so soon be public news, that it little matters who hears it: and yet the West, so full of strange changes, never sent to the Eastern half of the globe tidings so alarming as those I now come to tell your Imperial Highness. Europe, to borrow an expression from this lady, who honours me by calling me husband, seems loosened from its foundations and about to precipitate itself upon Asia ——'

'So I did express myself,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'and, as I trust, not altogether unforcibly, when we first heard that the wild impulse of those restless barbarians of Europe

had driven a tempest as of a thousand nations upon our western frontier, with the extravagant purpose, as they pretended, of possessing themselves of Syria, and the holy places there marked as the sepulchres of prophets, the martyrdom of saints, and the great events detailed in the blessed Gospel. But that storm, by all accounts, hath burst and passed away, and we well hoped that the danger had gone with it. Devoutly shall we sorrow to find it otherwise.'

'And otherwise we must expect to find it,' said her husband. 'It is very true, as reported to us, that a huge body of men of low rank, and little understanding, assumed arms at the instigation of a mad hermit, and took the road from Germany to Hungary, expecting miracles to be wrought in their favour, as when Israel was guided through the wilderness by a pillar of flame and a cloud. But no showers of manna or of quails relieved their necessities, or proclaimed them the chosen people of God. No waters gushed from the rock for their refreshment. They were enraged at their sufferings, and endeavoured to obtain supplies by pillaging the country. The Hungarians, and other nations on our western frontiers, Christians, like themselves, did not hesitate to fall upon this disorderly rabble; and immense piles of bones in wild passes and unfrequented deserts attest the calamitous defeats which extirpated these unholy pilgrims.'

'All this,' said the Emperor, 'we knew before; but what new evil now threatens, since we have already escaped so important a one?'

'Knew before!' said the Prince Nicephorus. 'We knew nothing of our real danger before, save that a wild herd of animals, as brutal and as furious as wild bulls, threatened to bend their way to a pasture for which they had formed a fancy, and deluged the Grecian empire and its vicinity in their passage, expecting that Palestine, with its streams of milk and honey, once more awaited them, as God's predestined people. But so wild and disorderly an invasion had no terrors for a civilised nation like the Romans. The brute herd was terrified by our Greek fire; it was snared and shot down by the wild nations who, while they pretend to independence, cover our frontier as with a protecting fortification. The vile multitude has been consumed even by the very quality of the provisions thrown in their way — those wise means of resistance which were at once suggested by the paternal care of the Emperor and by his unfailing policy. Thus wisdom has played its part,

and the bark over which the tempest had p··red its thunder has escaped, notwithstanding all its violence. But the second storm, by which the former is so closely foll wed, is of a new descent of these Western nations, more formidable than any which we or our fathers have yet seen. This consists not of the ignorant or of the fanatical, not of the base, the needy, and the improvident. Now, all that wide Europe possesses of what is wise and worthy, brave and noble, are united by the most religious vows in the same purpose.'

'And what is that purpose? Speak plainly,' said Alexius. 'The destruction of our whole Roman empire, and the blotting out the very name of its chief from among the princes of the earth, among which it has long been predominant, can alone be an adequate motive for a confederacy such as thy speech infers.'

'No such design is avowed,' said Nicephorus; 'and so many princes, wise men, and statesmen of eminence aim, it is pretended, at nothing else than the same extravagant purpose announced by the brute multitude who first appeared in these regions. Here, most gracious Emperor, is a scroll, in which you will find marked down a list of the various armies which, by different routes, are approaching the vicinity of the empire. Behold, Hugh of Vermandois, called from his dignity Hugh the Great, has set sail from the shores of Italy. Twenty knights have already announced their coming, sheathed in armour of steel, inlaid with gold, bearing this proud greeting: "Let the Emperor of Greece and his lieutenants understand that Hugo Earl of Vermandois is approaching his territories. He is brother to the king of kings — the king of France,[1] namely and is attended by the flower of the French nobility. He bears the blessed banner of St. Peter, entrusted to his victorious care by the holy successor of the apostle, and warns thee of all this, that thou mayst provide a reception suitable to his rank."'

'Here are sounding words,' said the Emperor; 'but the wind which whistles loudest is not always most dangerous to the vessel. We know something of this nation of France, and have heard more. They are as petulant at least as they are valiant; we will flatter their vanity till we get time and opportunity for more effectual defence. Tush! if words can pay debt, there is no fear of our exchequer becoming insolvent. What follows here, Nicephorus? A list, I suppose, of the followers of this great count?'

[1] See Note 5.

'My liege, no,' answered Nicephorus Briennius; 'so many independent chiefs as your Imperial Highness sees in that memorial, so many independent European armies are advancing by different routes towards the East, and announce the conquest of Palestine from the infidels as their common object.'

'A dreadful enumeration,' said the Emperor, as he perused the list; 'yet so far happy, that its very length assures us of the impossibility that so many princes can be seriously and consistently united in so wild a project. Thus already my eyes catch the well-known name of an old friend, our enemy — for such are the alternate chances of peace and war — Bohemond of Antioch. Is not he the son of the celebrated Robert of Apulia, so renowned among his countrymen, who raised himself to the rank of grand duke from a simple cavalier, and became sovereign of those of his warlike nation, both in Sicily and Italy? Did not the standards of the German Emperor, of the Roman Pontiff, nay, our own imperial banners, give way before him; until, equally a wily statesman and a brave warrior, he became the terror of Europe, from being a knight whose Norman castle would have been easily garrisoned by six cross-bows and as many lances? It is a dreadful family, a race of craft as well as power. But Bohemond, the son of old Robert, will follow his father's politics. He may talk of Palestine and of the interests of Christendom, but if I can make his interests the same with mine, he is not likely to be guided by any other object. So, then, with the knowledge I already possess of his wishes and projects, it may chance that Heaven sends us an ally in the guise of an enemy. Whom have we next? Godfrey[1] Duke of Bouillon — leading, I see, a most formidable band from the banks of a huge river called the Rhine. What is this person's character?'

'As we hear,' replied Nicephorus, 'this Godfrey is one of the wisest, noblest, and bravest of the leaders who have thus extravagely put themselves in motion; and among a list of independent princes, as many in number as those who assembled for the siege of Troy, and followed, most of them, by subjects ten times more numerous, this Godfrey may be regarded as the Agamemnon. The princes and counts esteem him, because he is the foremost in the ranks of those whom they fantastically call knights, and also on account of the good faith and generosity which he practises in all his transactions. The clergy

[1] Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, the great captain of the first Crusade, afterwards King of Jerusalem. See Gibbon, or Mills, *passim*.

give him credit for the highest zeal for the doctrines of religion, and a corresponding respect for the church and its dignitaries. Justice, liberality, and frankness have equally attached to this Godfrey the lower class of the people. His general attention to moral obligations is a pledge to them that his religion is real; and, gifted with so much that is excellent, he is already, although inferior in rank, birth, and power to many chiefs of the crusade, justly regarded as one of its principal leaders.'

'Pity,' said the Emperor, 'that a character such as you describe this prince to be should be under the dominion of a fanaticism scarce worthy of Peter the Hermit, or the clownish multitude which he led, or of the very ass which he rode upon; which I am apt to think the wisest of the first multitude whom we beheld, seeing that it ran away towards Europe as soon as water and barley became scarce.'

'Might I be permitted here to speak and yet live,' said Agelastes, 'I would remark, that the Patriarch himself made a similar retreat so soon as blows became plenty and food scarce.'

'Thou hast hit it, Agelastes,' said the Emperor; 'but the question now is, whether an honourable and important principality could not be formed out of part of the provinces of the Lesser Asia, now laid waste by the Turks. Such a principality, methinks, with its various advantages of soil, climate, industrious inhabitants, and a healthy atmosphere, were well worth the morasses of Bouillon. It might be held as a dependence upon the sacred Roman empire, and garrisoned, as it were, by Godfrey and his victorious Franks would be a bulwark on that point to our just and sacred person. Ha! most holy Patriarch, would not such a prospect shake the most devout crusader's attachment to the burning sands of Palestine?'

'Especially,' answered the Patriarch, 'if the prince for whom such a rich "theme"[1] was changed into a feudal appanage should be previously converted to the only true faith, as your Imperial Highness undoubtedly means.'

'Certainly — most unquestionably,' answered the Emperor, with a due affectation of gravity, notwithstanding he was internally conscious how often he had been compelled, by state necessities, to admit, not only Latin Christians, but Manichæans, and other heretics, nay Mohammedan barbarians, into the number of his subjects, and that without experiencing opposition from the scruples of the Patriarch. 'Here I find,' continued

[1] The provinces were called 'themes.'

the Emperor, 'such a numerous list of princes and principalities in the act of approaching our boundaries as might well rival the armies of old, who were said to have drunk up rivers, exhausted realms, and trode down forests, in their wasteful advance.' As he pronounced these words, a shade of paleness came over the imperial brow, similar to that which had already clothed in sadness most of his counsellors.

'This war of nations,' said Nicephorus, 'has also circumstances distinguishing it from every other, save that which his Imperial Highness hath waged in former times against those whom we are accustomed to call Franks. We must go forth against a people to whom the strife of combat is as the breath of their nostrils; who, rather than not be engaged in war, will do battle with their nearest neighbours, and challenge each other to mortal fight, as much in sport as we would defy a comrade to a chariot race. They are covered with an impenetrable armour of steel, defending them from blows of the lance and sword, and which the uncommon strength of their horses renders them able to support, though one of ours could as well bear Mount Olympus upon his loins. Their foot ranks carry a missile weapon unknown to us, termed an arblast, or cross-bow. It is not drawn with the right hand, like the bow of other nations, but by placing the feet upon the weapon itself, and pulling with the whole force of the body; and it despatches arrows called bolts, of hard wood pointed with iron, which the strength of the bow can send through the strongest breastplates, and even through stone walls, where not of uncommon thickness.'

'Enough,' said the Emperor; 'we have seen with our own eyes the lances of Frankish knights and the cross-bows of their infantry. If Heaven has allotted them a degree of bravery which to other nations seems wellnigh preternatural, the Divine will has given to the Greek councils that wisdom which it hath refused to barbarians — the art of achieving conquest by wisdom rather than brute force, obtaining by our skill in treaty advantages which victory itself could not have procured. If we have not the use of that dreadful weapon which our son-in-law terms the cross-bow, Heaven, in its favour, has concealed from these Western barbarians the composition and use of the Greek fire — well so called, since by Grecian hands alone it is prepared, and by such only can its lightnings be darted upon the astonished foe.' The Emperor paused and looked around him; and although the faces of his counsellors

still looked blank, he boldly proceeded: 'But to return yet again to this black scroll, containing the names of those nations who approach our frontier, here occur more than one with which, methinks, old memory should make us familiar, though our recollections are distant and confused. It becomes us to know who these men are, that we may avail ourselves of those feuds and quarrels among them which, being blown into life, may happily divert them from the prosecution of this extraordinary attempt in which they are now united. Here is, for example, one Robert, styled Duke of Normandy, who commands a goodly band of counts, with which title we are but too well acquainted; of "earls," a word totally strange to us, but apparently some barbaric title of honour; and of knights, whose names are compounded, as we think, chiefly of the French language, but also of another jargon, which we are not ourselves competent to understand. To you, most reverend and most learned Patriarch, we may fittest apply for information on this subject.'

'The duties of my station,' replied the Patriarch Zosimus, 'have withheld my riper years from studying the history of distant realms; but the wise Agelastes, who hath read as many volumes as would fill the shelves of the famous Alexandrian library, can no doubt satisfy your Imperial Majesty's inquiries.'

Agelastes erected himself on those enduring legs which had procured him the surname of Elephant, and began a reply to the inquiries of the Emperor rather remarkable for readiness than accuracy. 'I have read,' said he, 'in that brilliant mirror which reflects the time of our fathers, the volumes of the learned Procopius, that the people separately called Normans and Angles are in truth the same race, and that Normandy, sometimes so called, is in fact a part of a district of Gaul. Beyond, and nearly opposite to it, but separated by an arm of the sea, lies a ghostly region, on which clouds and tempests for ever rest, and which is well known to its continental neighbours as the abode to which departed spirits are sent after this life. On one side of the strait dwell a few fishermen, men possessed of a strange charter, and enjoying singular privileges, in consideration of their being the living ferrymen who, performing the office of the heathen Charon, carry the spirits of the departed to the island which is their residence after death. At the dead of night these fishermen are, in rotation, summoned to perform the duty by which they seem to hold the permission to reside on this strange coast. A knock is heard at the

door of his cottage who holds the turn of this singular service, sounded by no mortal hand. A whispering, as of a decaying breeze, summons the ferryman to his duty. He hastens to his bark on the sea-shore, and has no sooner launched it than he perceives its hull sink sensibly in the water, so as to express the weight of the dead with whom it is filled. No form is seen, and though voices are heard, yet the accents are undistinguishable, as of one who speaks in his sleep. Thus he traverses the strait between the continent and the island, impressed with the mysterious awe which affects the living when they are conscious of the presence of the dead. They arrive upon the opposite coast, where the cliffs of white chalk form a strange contrast with the eternal darkness of the atmosphere. They stop at a landing-place appointed, but disembark not, for the land is never trodden by earthly feet. Here the passage-boat is gradually lightened of its unearthly inmates, who wander forth in the way appointed to them, while the mariners slowly return to their own side of the strait, having performed for the time this singular service, by which they hold their fishing-huts and their possessions on that strange coast.'

Here he ceased; and the Emperor replied — 'If this legend be actually told us by Procopius, most learned Agelastes, it shows that that celebrated historian came more near the heathen than the Christian belief respecting the future state. In truth, this is little more than the old fable of the infernal Styx. Procopius, we believe, lived before the decay of heathenism, and, as we would gladly disbelieve much which he hath told us respecting our ancestor and predecessor Justinian, so we will not pay him much credit in future in point of geographical knowledge. Meanwhile, what ails thee, Achilles Tatius, and why dost thou whisper with that soldier?'

'My head,' answered Achilles Tatius, 'is at your imperial command, prompt to pay for the unbecoming trespass of my tongue. I did but ask of this Hereward here what he knew of this matter; for I have heard my Varangians repeatedly call themselves Anglo-Danes, Normans, Britons, or some other barbaric epithet, and I am sure that one or other, or it may be all, of these barbarous sounds at different times serve to designate the birthplace of these exiles, too happy in being banished from the darkness of barbarism to the luminous vicinity of your imperial presence.'

'Speak, then, Varangian, in the name of Heaven,' said the Emperor, 'and let us know whether we are to look for friends

or enemies in those men of Normandy who are now approaching our frontier. Speak with courage, man; and if thou apprehendest danger, remember thou servest a prince well qualified to protect thee.'

'Since I am at liberty to speak,' answered the life-guardsman, 'although my knowledge of the Greek language, which you term the Roman, is but slight, I trust it is enough to demand of his Imperial Highness, in place of all pay, donative, or gift whatsoever, since he has been pleased to talk of designing such for me, that he would place me in the first line of battle which shall be formed against these same Normans and their Duke Robert; and if he pleases to allow me the aid of such Varangians as, for love of me, or hatred of their ancient tyrants, may be disposed to join their arms to mine, I have little doubt so to settle our long accounts with these men, that the Grecian eagles and wolves shall do them the last office, by tearing the flesh from their bones.'

'What dreadful feud is this, my soldier,' said the Emperor, 'that after so many years still drives thee to such extremities when the very name of Normandy is mentioned?'

'Your Imperial Highness shall be judge,' said the Varangian. 'My fathers, and those of most, though not all, of the corps to whom I belong, are descended from a valiant race who dwelt in the north of Germany, called Anglo-Saxons. Nobody, save a priest possessed of the art of consulting ancient chronicles, can even guess how long it is since they came to the island of Britain, then distracted with civil war. They came, however, on the petition of the natives of the island, for the aid of the Angles was requested by the southern inhabitants. Provinces were granted in recompense of the aid thus liberally afforded, and the greater proportion of the island became, by degrees, the property of the Anglo-Saxons, who occupied it at first as several principalities, and latterly as one kingdom, speaking the language, and observing the laws, of most of those who now form your imperial body-guard of Varangians, or exiles. In process of time, the Northmen became known to the people of the more southern climates. They were so called from their coming from the distant regions of the Baltic Sea — an immense ocean, sometimes frozen with ice as hard as the cliffs of Mount Caucasus. They came seeking milder regions than nature had assigned them at home; and the climate of France being delightful, and its people slow in battle, they extorted from them the grant of a large province, which was, from the name

of the new settlers, called Normandy, though I have heard my father say that was not its proper appellation. They settled there under a duke, who acknowledged the superior authority of the king of France, that is to say, obeying him when it suited his convenience so to do.

'Now it chanced many years since, while these two nations of Normans and Anglo-Saxons were quietly residing upon different sides of the salt-water channel which divides France from England, that William, Duke of Normandy, suddenly levied a large army, came over to Kent, which is on the opposite side of the channel, and there defeated, in a great battle, Harold, who was at that time king of the Anglo-Saxons. It is but grief to tell what followed. Battles have been fought in old time that have had dreadful results, which years, nevertheless, could wash away; but at Hastings — O woe is me! — the banner of my country fell, never again to be raised up. Oppression has driven her wheel over us. All that was valiant amongst us have left the land; and of Englishmen — for such is our proper designation — no one remains in England save as the thrall of the invaders. Many men of Danish descent, who had found their way on different occasions to England, were blended in the common calamity. All was laid desolate by the command of the victors. My father's home lies now an undistinguished ruin, amid an extensive forest, composed out of what were formerly fair fields and domestic pastures, where a manly race derived nourishment by cultivating a friendly soil. The fire has destroyed the church where sleep the fathers of my race; and I, the last of their line, am a wanderer in other climates, a fighter of the battles of others, the servant of a foreign, though a kind, master, in a word, one of the banished — a Varangian.'

'Happier in that station,' said Achilles Tatius, 'than in all the barbaric simplicity which your forefathers prized so highly, since you are now under the cheering influence of that smile which is the life of the world.'

'It avails not talking of this,' said the Varangian, with a cold gesture.

'These Normans,' said the Emperor, 'are then the people by whom the celebrated island of Britain is now conquered and governed?'

'It is but too true,' answered the Varangian.

'They are, then, a brave and warlike people?' said Alexius.

'It would be base and false to say otherwise of an enemy,'

said Hereward. 'Wrong have they done me, and a wrong never to be atoned; but to speak falsehood of them were but a woman's vengeance. Mortal enemies as they are to me, and mingling with all my recollections as that which is hateful and odious, yet were the troops of Europe mustered, as it seems they are likely to be, no nation or tribe dared in gallantry claim the advance of the haughty Norman.'

'And this Duke Robert, who is he?'

'That,' answered the Varangian, 'I cannot so well explain. He is the son — the eldest son, as men say, of the tyrant William, who subdued England when I hardly existed, or was a child in the cradle. That William, the victor of Hastings, is now dead, we are assured by concurring testimony; but while it seems his eldest son Duke Robert has become his heir to the duchy of Normandy, some other of his children have been so fortunate as to acquire the throne of England — unless, indeed, like the petty farm of some obscure yeoman, the fair kingdom has been divided among the tyrant's issue.'

'Concerning this,' said the Emperor, 'we have heard something, which we shall try to reconcile with the soldier's narrative at leisure, holding the words of this honest Varangian as positive proof, in whatsoever he avers from his own knowledge. And now, my grave and worthy counsellors, we must close this evening's service in the temple of the Muses, this distressing news, brought us by our dearest son-in-law, the Cæsar, having induced us to prolong our worship of these learned goddesses deeper into the night than is consistent with the health of our beloved wife and daughter; while, to ourselves, this intelligence brings subject for grave deliberation.'

The courtiers exhausted their ingenuity in forming the most ingenious prayers that all evil consequences should be averted which could attend this excessive vigilance.

Nicephorus and his fair bride spoke together as a pair equally desirous to close an accidental breach between them. 'Some things thou hast said, my Cæsar,' observed the lady, 'in detailing this dreadful intelligence, as elegantly turned as if the nine goddesses, to whom this temple is dedicated, had lent each her aid to the sense and expression.'

'I need none of their assistance,' answered Nicephorus, 'since I possess a muse of my own, in whose genius are included all those attributes which the heathens vainly ascribed to the nine deities of Parnassus.'

'It is well,' said the fair historian, retiring by the assistance

of her husband's arm; 'but if you will load your wife with praises far beyond her merits, you must lend her your arm to support her under the weighty burden you have been pleased to impose.' The council parted when the imperial persons had retired, and most of them sought to indemnify themselves in more free, though less dignified, circles for the constraint which they had practised in the temple of the Muses.

CHAPTER VI

Vain man! thou mayst esteem thy love as fair
As fond hyperboles suffice to raise,
She may be all that 's matchless in her person,
And all-divine in soul to match her body;
But take this from me — thou shalt never call her
Superior to her sex, while *one* survives,
And I am her true votary.

Old Play.

ACHILLES TATIUS, with his faithful Varangian close by his shoulder, melted from the dispersing assembly silently and almost invisibly, as snow is dissolved from its Alpine abodes as the days become more genial. No lordly step or clash of armour betokened the retreat of the military persons. The very idea of the necessity of guards was not ostentatiously brought forward, because, so near the presence of the Emperor, the emanation supposed to flit around that divinity of earthly sovereigns had credit for rendering it impassive and unassailable. Thus the oldest and most skilful courtiers, among whom our friend Agelastes was not to be forgotten, were of opinion that, although the Emperor employed the ministry of the Varangians and other guards, it was rather for form's sake than from any danger of the commission of a crime of a kind so heinous that it was the fashion to account it almost impossible. And this doctrine, of the rare occurrence of such a crime, was repeated from month to month in those very chambers where it had oftener than once been perpetrated, and sometimes by the very persons who monthly laid schemes for carrying some dark conspiracy against the reigning emperor into positive execution.

At length the captain of the life-guardsmen and his faithful attendant found themselves on the outside of the Blacquernal Palace. The passage which Achilles found for their exit was closed by a postern which a single Varangian shut behind them, drawing, at the same time, bolt and bar with an ill-omened and

jarring sound. Looking back at the mass of turrets, battlements, and spires out of which they had at length emerged, Hereward could not but feel his heart lighten to find himself once more under the deep blue of a Grecian heaven, where the planets were burning with unusual lustre. He sighed and rubbed his hands with pleasure, like a man newly restored to liberty. He even spoke to his leader, contrary to his custom unless addressed. 'Methinks the air of yonder halls, valorous captain, carries with it a perfume which, though it may be well termed sweet, is so suffocating as to be more suitable to sepulchrous chambers than to the dwellings of men. Happy I am that I am free, as I trust, from its influences.'

'Be happy, then,' said Achilles Tatius, 'since thy vile, cloddish spirit feels suffocation rather than refreshment in gales which, instead of causing death, might recall the dead themselves to life. Yet this I will say for thee, Hereward, that, born a barbarian within the narrow circle of a savage's desires and pleasures, and having no idea of life save what thou derivest from such vile and base connexions, thou art, nevertheless, designed by nature for better things, and hast this day sustained a trial in which, I fear me, not even one of mine own noble corps, frozen as they are into lumps of unfashioned barbarity, could have equalled thy bearing. And speak now in true faith, hast not thou been rewarded?'

'That will I never deny,' said the Varangian. 'The pleasure of knowing, twenty-four hours perhaps before my comrades, that the Normans are coming hither to afford us a full revenge of the bloody day of Hastings is a lordly recompense for the task of spending some hours in hearing the lengthened chat of a lady, who has written about she knows not what, and the flattering commentaries of the bystanders, who pretended to give her an account of what they did not themselves stop to witness.'

'Hereward, my good youth,' said Achilles Tatius, 'thou ravest, and I think I should do well to place thee under the custody of some person of skill. Too much hardihood, my valiant soldier, is in soberness allied to overdaring. It was only natural that thou shouldst feel a becoming pride in thy late position; yet, let it but taint thee with vanity, and the effect will be little short of madness. Why, thou hast looked boldly in the face of a princess born in the purple, before whom my own eyes, though well used to such spectacles, are never raised beyond the foldings of her veil.'

'So be it, in the name of Heaven!' replied Hereward. 'Nevertheless, handsome faces were made to look upon, and the eyes of young men to see withal.'

'If such be their final end,' said Achilles, 'never did thine, I will freely suppose, find a richer apology for the somewhat overbold license which thou tookest in thy gaze upon the Princess this evening.'

'Good leader, or Follower, whichever is your favourite title,' said the Anglo-Briton, 'drive not to extremity a plain man, who desires to hold his duty in all honour to the imperial family. The Princess, wife of the Cæsar, and born, you tell me, of a purple colour, has now inherited, notwithstanding, the features of a most lovely woman. She hath composed a history, of which I presume not to form a judgment, since I cannot understand it; she sings like an angel; and to conclude, after the fashion of the knights of this day — though I deal not ordinarily with their language — I would say cheerfully that I am ready to place myself in lists against any one whomsoever who dares detract from the beauty of the imperial Anna Comnena's person, or from the virtues of her mind. Having said this, my noble captain, we have said all that it is competent for you to inquire into or for me to answer. That there are handsomer women than the Princess is unquestionable; and I question it the less, that I have myself seen a person whom I think far her superior; and with that let us close the dialogue.'

'Thy beauty, thou unparalleled fool,' said Achilles, 'must, I ween, be the daughter of the large-bodied Northern boor, living next door to him upon whose farm was brought up the person of an ass, curst with such intolerable want of judgment.'

'You may say your pleasure, captain,' replied Hereward; 'because it is the safer for us both that thou canst not on such a topic either offend me, who hold thy judgment as light as thou canst esteem mine, or speak any derogation of a person whom you never saw, but whom, if you had seen, perchance I might not so patiently have brooked any reflections upon, even at the hands of a military superior.'

Achilles Tatius had a good deal of the penetration necessary for one in his situation. He never provoked to extremity the daring spirits whom he commanded, and never used any freedom with them beyond the extent that he knew their patience could bear. Hereward was a favourite soldier, and had, in that respect at least, a sincere liking and regard for his commander;

when, therefore, the Follower, instead of resenting his petulance, good-humouredly apologised for having hurt his feelings, the momentary displeasure between them was at an end: the officer at once reassumed his superiority, and the soldier sunk back with a deep sigh, given to some period which was long past, into his wonted silence and reserve. Indeed, the Follower had another and further design upon Hereward, of which he was as yet unwilling to do more than give a distant hint.

After a long pause, during which they approached the barracks, a gloomy fortified building constructed for the residence of their corps, the captain motioned his soldier to draw close up to his side, and proceeded to ask him, in a confidential tone — 'Hereward, my friend, although it is scarce to be supposed that in the presence of the imperial family thou shouldst mark any one who did not partake of their blood, or rather, as Homer has it, who did not participate of the divine *ichor*, which, in their sacred persons, supplies the place of that vulgar fluid, yet, during so long an audience, thou mightst possibly, from his uncourtly person and attire, have distinguished Agelastes, whom we courtiers call the Elephant, from his strict observation of the rule which forbids any one to sit down or rest in the imperial presence?'

'I think,' replied the soldier, 'I marked the man you mean: his age was some seventy [sixty] and upwards — a big, burly person; and the baldness which reached to the top of his head was well atoned for by a white beard of prodigious size, which descended in waving curls over his breast, and reached to the towel with which his loins were girded, instead of the silken sash used by other persons of rank.'

'Most accurately marked, my Varangian,' said the officer. 'What else didst thou note about this person?'

'His cloak was in its texture as coarse as that of the meanest of the people, but it was strictly clean, as if it had been the intention of the wearer to exhibit poverty, or carelessness and contempt of dress, avoiding, at the same time, every particular which implied anything negligent, sordid, or disgusting.'

'By St. Sophia,' said the officer, 'thou astonishest me! The prophet Balaam was not more surprised when his ass turned round her head and spoke to him. And what else didst thou note concerning this man? I see those who meet thee must beware of thy observation as well as of thy battle-axe.'

'If it please your valour,' answered the soldier,' we English have eyes as well as hands; but it is only when discharging

our duty that we permit our tongues to dwell on what we have observed. I noted but little of this man's conversation; but from what I heard, it seemed he was not unwilling to play what we call the jester, or jack-pudding, in the conversation — a character which, considering the man's age and physiognomy, is not, I should be tempted to say, natural, but assumed for some purpose of deeper import.'

'Hereward,' answered his officer, 'thou hast spoken like an angel sent down to examine men's bosoms: that man, Agelastes, is a contradiction such as earth has seldom witnessed. Possessing all that wisdom which in former times united the sages of this nation with the gods themselves, Agelastes has the same cunning as the elder Brutus, who disguised his talents under the semblance of an idle jester. He appears to seek no office — he desires no consideration — he pays suit at court only when positively required to do so; yet what shall I say, my soldier, concerning the cause of an influence gained without apparent effort, and extending almost into the very thoughts of men, who appear to act as he would desire, without his soliciting them to that purpose? Men say strange things concerning the extent of his communications with other beings, whom our fathers worshipped with prayer and sacrifice. I am determined, however, to know the road by which he climbs so high and so easily towards the point to which all men aspire at court, and it will go hard but he shall either share his ladder with me or I will strike its support from under him. Thee, Hereward, I have chosen to assist me in this matter, as the knights among these Frankish infidels select, when going upon an adventure, a sturdy squire, or inferior attendant, to share the dangers and the recompense: and this I am moved to, as much by the shrewdness thou hast this night manifested as by the courage which thou mayst boast, in common with, or rather beyond, thy companions.'

'I am obliged, and I thank your valour,' replied the Varangian, more coldly perhaps than his officer expected; 'I am ready, as is my duty, to serve you in anything consistent with God and the Emperor's claims upon my service. I would only say that, as a sworn inferior soldier, I will do nothing contrary to the laws of the empire, and, as a sincere though ignorant Christian, I will have nothing to do with the gods of the heathens, save to defy them in the name and strength of the holy saints.'

'Idiot!' said Achilles Tatius, 'dost thou think that I,

already possessed of one of the first dignities of the empire, could meditate anything contrary to the interests of Alexius Comnenus? or, what would be scarce more atrocious, that I, the chosen friend and ally of the reverend Patriarch Zosimus, should meddle with anything bearing a relation, however remote, to heresy or idolatry?'

'Truly,' answered the Varangian, 'no one would be more surprised or grieved than I should; but when we walk in a labyrinth, we must assume and announce that we have a steady and forward purpose, which is one mode at least of keeping a straight path. The people of this country have so many ways of saying the same thing, that one can hardly know at last what is their real meaning. We English, on the other hand, can only express ourselves in one set of words, but it is one out of which all the ingenuity of the world could not extract a double meaning.'

'T is well,' said his officer; 'to-morrow we will talk more of this, for which purpose thou wilt come to my quarters a little after sunset. And hark thee, to-morrow, while the sun is in heaven, shall be thine own, either to sport thyself or to repose. Employ thy time in the latter, by my advice, since to-morrow night, like the present, may find us both watchers.'

So saying, they entered the barracks, where they parted company — the commander of the life-guards taking his way to a splendid set of apartments which belonged to him in that capacity, and the Anglo-Saxon seeking his more humble accommodations as a subaltern officer of the same corps.

CHAPTER VII

Such forces met not, nor so vast a camp,
When Agrican, with all his Northern po[illegible],
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphron, from thence to wi[illegible]
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowess'd knights,
Both paynim and the peers of Charlemagne.

Paradise Regained.

EARLY on the morning of the day following that which we have commemorated, the imperial council was assembled, where the number of general officers with sounding titles disguised under a thin veil the real weakness of the Grecian empire. The commanders were numerous, and the distinctions of their rank minute, but the soldiers were very few in comparison.

The offices formerly filled by prefects, prætors, and questors were now held by persons who had gradually risen into the authority of those officers, and who, though designated from their domestic duties about the Emperor, yet, from that very circumstance, possessed what, in that despotic court, was the most effectual source of power. A long train of officers entered the great hall of the Castle of Blacquernal, and proceeded so far together as their different grades admitted, while in each chamber through which they passed in succession a certain number of the train, whose rank permitted them to advance no farther, remained behind the others. Thus, when the interior cabinet of audience was gained, which was not until their passage through ten ante-rooms, five persons only found themselves in the presence of the Emperor in this innermost and most sacred recess of royalty, decorated by all the splendour of the period.

The Emperor Alexius sat upon a stately throne, rich with barbaric gems and gold, and flanked on either hand, in imitation probably of Solomon's magnificence, with the form of a couchant lion in the same precious metal. Not to dwell upon

other marks of splendour, a tree, whose trunk seemed also of gold, shot up behind the throne, which it overcanopied with its branches. Amid the boughs were birds of various kinds, curiously wrought and enamelled, and fruit composed of precious stones seemed to glisten among the leaves. Five officers alone, the highest in the state, had the privilege of entering this sacred recess when the Emperor held council. These were the Grand Domestic, who might be termed of rank with a modern prime minister; the Logothete, or chancellor; the Protospathaire, or commander of the guards, already mentioned; the Acolyte, or Follower, and leader of the Varangians; and the Patriarch.

The doors of this secret apartment and the adjacent antechamber were guarded by six deformed Nubian slaves, whose writhen and withered countenances formed a hideous contrast with their snow-white dresses and splendid equipment. They were mutes, a species of wretches borrowed from the despotism of the East, that they might be unable to proclaim the deeds of tyranny of which they were the unscrupulous agents. They were generally held in a kind of horror rather than compassion, for men considered that slaves of this sort had a malignant pleasure in avenging upon others the irreparable wrongs which had severed themselves from humanity.

It was a general custom, though, like many other usages of the Greeks, it would be held childish in modern times, that, by means of machinery easily conceived, the lions, at the entrance of a stranger, were made, as it were, to rouse themselves and roar, after which a wind seemed to rustle the foliage of the tree, the birds hopped from branch to branch, pecked the fruit, and appeared to fill the chamber with their carolling. This display had alarmed many an ignorant foreign ambassador, and even the Grecian counsellors themselves were expected to display the same sensations of fear, succeeded by surprise, when they heard the roar of the lions, followed by the concert of the birds, although perhaps it was for the fiftieth time. On this occasion, as a proof of the urgency of the present meeting of the council, these ceremonies were entirely omitted.

The speech of the Emperor himself seemed to supply by its commencement the bellowing of the lions, while it ended in a strain more resembling the warbling of the birds.

In his first sentences, he treated of the audacity and unheard-of boldness of the millions of Franks, who, under the pretence of wresting Palestine from the infidels, had ventured

to invade the sacred territories of the empire. He threatened them with such chastisement as his innumerable forces and officers would, he affirmed, find it easy to inflict. To all this the audience, and especially the military officers, gave symptoms of ready assent.

Alexius, however, did not long persist in the warlike intentions which he at first avowed. The Franks, he at length seemed to reflect, were, in profession, Christians. They might possibly be serious in their pretext of a crusade, in which case their motives claimed a degree of indulgence, and, although erring, a certain portion of respect. Their numbers also were great, and their valour could not be despised by those who had seen them fight at Durazzo[1] and elsewhere. They might also, by the permission of Supreme Providence, be in the long run the instruments of advantage to the most sacred empire, though they approached it with so little ceremony. He had, therefore, mingling the virtues of prudence, humanity, and generosity with that valour which must always burn in the heart of an Emperor, formed a plan, which he was about to submit to their consideration, for present execution; and, in the first place, he requested of the Grand Domestic to let him know what forces he might count upon on the western side of the Bosphorus.

'Innumerable are the forces of the empire as the stars in heaven, or the sand on the sea-shore,' answered the Grand Domestic.

'That is a goodly answer,' said the Emperor, 'provided there were strangers present at this conference; but, since we hold consultation in private, it is necessary that I know precisely to what number that army amounts which I have to rely upon. Reserve your eloquence till a fitter time, and let me know what you, at this present moment, mean by the word "innumerable."'

The Grand Domestic paused, and hesitated for a short space; but, as he became aware that the moment was one in which the Emperor could not be trifled with, for Alexius Comnenus was at times dangerous, he answered thus, but not without hesitation — 'Imperial master and lord, none better knows that such an answer cannot be hastily made, if it is at the same time to be correct in its results. The number of the

[1] For the battle of Durazzo, Oct. 1081, in which Alexius was defeated with great slaughter by Robert Guiscard, and escaped only by the swiftness of his horse, see Gibbon, ch. lvi.

imperial host betwixt this city and the western frontier of the empire, deducing those absent upon furlough, cannot be counted upon as amounting to more than twenty-five thousand men, or thirty thousand at most.'

Alexius struck his forehead with his hand; and the counsellors, seeing him give way to such violent expressions of grief and surprise, began to enter into discussions which they would otherwise have reserved for a fitter place and time.

'By the trust your Highness reposes in me,' said the Logothete, 'there has been drawn from your Highness's coffers during the last year gold enough to pay double the number of the armed warriors whom the Grand Domestic now mentions.'

'Your Imperial Highness,' retorted the impeached minister, with no small animation, 'will at once remember the stationary garrisons, in addition to the movable troops, for which this figure-caster makes no allowance.'

'Peace, both of you!' said Alexius, composing himself hastily; 'our actual numbers are in truth less than we counted on, but let us not by wrangling augment the difficulties of the time. Let those troops be dispersed in valleys, in passes, behind ridges of hills, and in difficult ground, where a little art being used in the position can make few men supply the appearance of numbers, between this city and the western frontier of the empire. While this disposal is made, we will continue to adjust with these crusaders, as they call themselves, the terms on which we will consent to let them pass through our dominions; nor are we without hope of negotiating with them, so as to gain great advantage to our kingdom. We will insist that they pass through our country only by armies of perhaps fifty thousand at once, whom we will successively transport into Asia, so that no greater number shall, by assembling beneath our walls, ever endanger the safety of the metropolis of the world.

'On their way towards the banks of the Bosphorus, we will supply them with provisions, if they march peaceably and in order; and if any straggle from their standards, or insult the country by marauding, we suppose our valiant peasants will not hesitate to repress their excesses, and that without our giving positive orders, since we would not willingly be charged with anything like a breach of engagement. We suppose, also, that the Scythians, Arabs, Syrians, and other mercenaries in our service will not suffer our subjects to be overpowered in their own just defence; as, besides that there is no justice

in stripping our own country of provisions, in order to feed strangers, we will not be surprised, nor unpardonably displeased, to learn that, of the ostensible quantity of flour, some sacks should be found filled with chalk, or lime, or some such substance. It is, indeed, truly wonderful what the stomach of a Frank will digest comfortably. Their guides, also, whom you shall choose with reference to such duty, will take care to conduct the crusaders by difficult and circuitous routes; which will be doing them a real service, by inuring them to the hardships of the country and climate, which they would otherwise have to face without seasoning.

'In the meantime, in your intercourse with their chiefs, whom they call counts, each of whom thinks himself as great as an emperor, you will take care to give no offence to their natural presumption, and omit no opportunity of informing them of the wealth and bounty of our government. Sums of money may be even given to persons of note, and largesses of less avail to those under them. You, our Logothete, will take good order for this, and you, our Grand Domestic, will take care that such soldiers as may cut off detached parties of the Franks shall be presented, if possible, in savage dress, and under the show of infidels. In commending these injunctions to your care, I purpose that the crusaders, having found the value of our friendship, and also in some sort the danger of our enmity, those whom we shall safely transport to Asia shall be, however unwieldy, still a smaller and more compact body, whom we may deal with in all Christian prudence. Thus, by using fair words to one, threats to another, gold to the avaricious, power to the ambitious, and reasons to those that are capable of listening to them, we doubt not but to prevail upon those Franks, met as they are from a thousand points, and enemies of each other, to acknowledge us as their common superior, rather than choose a leader among themselves, when they are made aware of the great fact that every village in Palestine, from Dan to Beersheba, is the original property of the sacred Roman empire, and that whatever Christian goes to war for their recovery must go as our subject, and hold any conquest which he may make as our vassal. Vice and virtue, sense and folly, ambition and disinterested devotion, will alike recommend to the survivors of these singular-minded men to become the feudatories of the empire, not its foe, and the shield, not the enemy, of your paternal Emperor.'

There was a general inclination of the head among the

courtiers, with the Eastern exclamation of, 'Long live the Emperor!'

When the murmur of this applausive exclamation had subsided, Alexius proceeded — 'Once more, I say, that my faithful Grand Domestic, and those who act under him, will take care to commit the execution of such part of these orders as may seem aggressive to troops of foreign appearance and language, which, I grieve to say, are more numerous in our imperial army than our natural born and orthodox subjects.'

The Patriarch here interposed his opinion. 'There is a consolation,' he said, 'in the thought that the genuine Romans in the imperial army are but few, since a trade so bloody as war is most fitly prosecuted by those whose doctrines, as well as their doings, on earth merit eternal condemnation in the next world.'

'Reverend Patriarch,' said the Emperor, 'we would not willingly hold, with the wild infidels, that Paradise is to be gained by the sabre; nevertheless, we would hope that a Roman dying in battle for his religion and his Emperor may find as good hope of acceptation, after the mortal pang is over, as a man who dies in peace, and with unbloodied hand.'

'It is enough for me to say,' resumed the Patriarch, 'that the church's doctrine is not so indulgent: she is herself peaceful, and her promises of favour are for those who have been men of peace. Yet think not I bar the gates of Heaven against a soldier, as such, if believing all the doctrines of our church, and complying with all our observances; far less would I condemn your Imperial Majesty's wise precautions, both for diminishing the power and thinning the ranks of those Latin heretics, who come hither to despoil us, and plunder perhaps both church and temple, under the vain pretext that Heaven would permit them, stained with so many heresies, to reconquer that Holy Land which true orthodox Christians, your Majesty's sacred predecessors, have not been enabled to retain from the infidel. And well I trust that no settlement made under the Latins will be permitted by your Majesty to establish itself in which the cross shall not be elevated with limbs of the same length, instead of that irregular and most damnable error which prolongs, in Western churches, the nether limb of that most holy emblem.'

'Reverend Patriarch,' answered the Emperor, 'do not deem that we think lightly of your weighty scruples; but the question is now, not in what manner we may convert these Latin heretics to the true faith, but how we may avoid being overrun

by their myriads, which resemble those of the locusts by which their approach was preceded and intimated.'

'Your Majesty,' said the Patriarch, 'will act with your usual wisdom; for my part, I have only stated my doubts, that I may save my own soul alive.'

'Our construction,' said the Emperor, 'does your sentiments no wrong, most reverend Patriarch; and you,' addressing himself to the other counsellors, 'will attend to these separate charges given out for directing the execution of the commands which have been generally intimated to you. They are written out in the sacred ink, and our sacred subscription is duly marked with the fitting tinge of green and purple. Let them, therefore, be strictly obeyed. Ourselves will assume the command of such of the Immortal Bands as remain in the city, and join to them the cohorts of our faithful Varangians. At the head of these troops we will await the arrival of these strangers under the walls of the city, and, avoiding combat while our policy can postpone it, we will be ready, in case of the worst, to take whatsoever chance it shall please the Almighty to send us.'

Here the council broke up, and the different chiefs began to exert themselves in the execution of their various instructions, civil and military, secret or public, favourable or hostile to the crusaders. The peculiar genius of the Grecian people was seen upon this occasion. Their loud and boastful talking corresponded with the ideas which the Emperor wished to enforce upon the crusaders concerning the extent of his power and resources. Nor is it to be disguised that the wily selfishness of most of those in the service of Alexius endeavoured to find some indirect way of applying the imperial instruction so as might best suit their own private ends.

Meantime, the news had gone abroad in Constantinople of the arrival of the huge miscellaneous army of the West upon the limits of the Grecian empire, and of their purpose to pass to Palestine. A thousand reports magnified, if that was possible, an event so wonderful. Some said that their ultimate view was the conquest of Arabia, the destruction of the Prophet's tomb, and the conversion of his green banner into a horse-cloth for the king of France's brother. Others supposed that the ruin and sack of Constantinople was the real object of the war. A third class thought it was in order to compel the Patriarch to submit himself to the Pope, adopt the Latin form of the cross, and put an end to the schism.

The Varangians enjoyed an addition to this wonderful news, seasoned as it everywhere was with something peculiarly suited to the prejudices of the hearers. It was gathered originally from what our friend Hereward, who was one of their inferior officers, called sergeants or constables, had suffered to transpire of what he had heard the preceding evening. Considering that the fact must be soon matter of notoriety, he had no hesitation to give his comrades to understand that a Norman army was coming hither under Duke Robert, the son of the far famed William the Conqueror, and with hostile intentions, he concluded, against them in particular. Like all other men in peculiar circumstances, the Varangians adopted an explanation applicable to their own condition. These Normans, who hated the Saxon nation, and had done so much to dishonour and oppress them, were now following them, they supposed, to the foreign capital where they had found refuge, with the purpose of making war on the bountiful prince who protected their sad remnant. Under this belief, many a deep oath was sworn in Norse and Anglo-Saxon, that their keen battle-axes should avenge the slaughter of Hastings, and many a pledge, both in wine and ale, was quaffed, who should most deeply resent and most effectually revenge the wrongs which the Anglo-Saxons of England had received at the hand of their oppressors.

Hereward, the author of this intelligence, began soon to be sorry that he had ever suffered it to escape him, so closely was he cross-examined concerning its precise import, by the inquiries of his comrades, from whom he thought himself obliged to keep concealed the adventures of the preceding evening, and the place in which he had gained his information.

About noon, when he was effectually tired with returning the same answer to the same questions, and evading similar others which were repeatedly put to him, the sound of trumpets announced the presence of the Acolyte Achilles Tatius, who came immediately, it was industriously whispered, from the sacred interior, with news of the immediate approach of war.

The Varangians and the Roman bands called Immortal, it was said, were to form a camp under the city, in order to be prompt to defend it at the shortest notice. This put the whole barracks into commotion, each man making the necessary provision for the approaching campaign. The noise was chiefly that of joyful bustle and acclamation: and it was so general, that Hereward, whose rank permitted him to commit to a page, or esquire, the task of preparing his equipments, took the

opportunity to leave the barracks, in order to seek some distant place apart from his comrades, and enjoy his solitary reflections upon the singular connexion into which he had been drawn, and his direct communication with the imperial family.

Passing through the narrow streets, then deserted on account of the heat of the sun, he reached at length one of those broad terraces which, descending, as it were by steps, upon the margin of the Bosphorus, formed one of the most splendid walks in the universe, and still, it is believed, preserved as a public promenade for the pleasure of the Turks, as formerly for that of the Christians. These graduated terraces were planted with many trees, among which the cypress, as usual, was most generally cultivated. Here bands of the inhabitants were to be seen — some passing to and fro, with business and anxiety in their faces; some standing still in groups, as if discussing the strange and weighty tidings of the day; and some, with the indolent carelessness of an Eastern climate, eating their noontide refreshment in the shade, and spending their time as if their sole object was to make much of the day as it passed, and let the cares of to-morrow answer for themselves.

While the Varangian, afraid of meeting some acquaintance in this concourse, which would have been inconsistent with the desire of seclusion which had brought him thither, descended or passed from one terrace to another, all marked him with looks of curiosity and inquiry, considering him to be one who, from his arms and connexion with the court, must necessarily know more than others concerning the singular invasion by numerous enemies, and from various quarters, which was the news of the day. None, however, had the hardihood to address the soldier of the guard, though all looked at him with uncommon interest. He walked from the lighter to the darker alleys, from the more closed to the more open terraces, without interruption from any one, yet not without a feeling that he must not consider himself as alone.

The desire that he felt to be solitary rendered him at last somewhat watchful, so that he became sensible that he was dogged by a black slave, a personage not so unfrequent in the streets of Constantinople as to excite any particular notice. His attention, however, being at length fixed on this individual, he began to be desirous to escape his observation; and the change of place which he had at first adopted to avoid society in general he had now recourse to, in order to rid himself of

this distant, though apparently watchful, attendant. Still, however, though he by change of place had lost sight of the negro for a few minutes, it was not long ere he again discovered him, at a distance too far for a companion, but near enough to serve all the purposes of a spy. Displeased at this, the Varangian turned short in his walk, and, choosing a spot where none was in sight but the object of his resentment, walked suddenly up to him, and demanded wherefore, and by whose orders, he presumed to dog his footsteps. The negro answered in a jargon as bad as that in which he was addressed, though of a different kind, 'that he had orders to remark whither he went.'

'Orders from whom?' said the Varangian.

'From my master and yours,' answered the negro, boldly.

'Thou infidel villain!' exclaimed the angry soldier, 'when was it that we became fellow-servants, and who is it that thou darest to call my master?'

'One who is master of the world,' said the slave, 'since he commands his own passions.'

'I shall scarce command mine,' said the Varangian, 'if thou repliest to my earnest questions with thine affected quirks of philosophy. Once more, what dost thou want with me? and why hast thou the boldness to watch me?'

'I have told thee already,' said the slave, 'that I do my master's commands.'

'But I must know who thy master is,' said Hereward.

'He must tell thee that himself,' replied the negro: 'he trusts not a poor slave like me with the purpose of the errands on which he sends me.'

'He has left thee a tongue, however,' said the Varangian, 'which some of thy countrymen would, I think, be glad to possess. Do not provoke me to abridge it by refusing me the information which I have a right to demand.'

The black meditated, as it seemed from the grin on his face, further evasions, when Hereward cut them short by raising the staff of his battle-axe. 'Put me not,' he said, 'to dishonour myself by striking thee with this weapon, calculated for a use so much more noble.'

'I may not do so, valiant sir,' said the negro, laying aside an impudent, half-gibing tone which he had hitherto made use of, and betraying personal fear in his manner. 'If you beat the poor slave to death, you cannot learn what his master hath forbid him to tell. A short walk will save your honour the stain, and yourself the trouble, of beating what cannot resist,

and me the pain of enduring what I can neither retaliate nor avoid.'

'Lead on, then,' said the Varangian. 'Be assured thou shalt not fool me by thy fair words, and I will know the person who is impudent enough to assume the right of watching my motions.'

The black walked on with a species of leer peculiar to his physiognomy, which might be construed as expressive either of malice or of mere humour. The Varangian followed him with some suspicion, for it happened that he had had little intercourse with the unhappy race of Africa, and had not totally overcome the feeling of surprise with which he had at first regarded them when he arrived a stranger from the North. So often did this man look back upon him during their walk, and with so penetrating and observing a cast of countenance, that Hereward felt irresistibly renewed in his mind the English prejudices which assigned to the demons the sable colour and distorted cast of visage of his conductor. The scene into which he was guided strengthened an association which was not of itself unlikely to occur to the ignorant and martial islander.

The negro led the way from the splendid terraced walks which we have described to a path descending to the sea-shore, when a place appeared which, far from being trimmed, like other parts of the coast, into walks or embankments, seemed, on the contrary, abandoned to neglect, and was covered with the mouldering ruins of antiquity, where these had not been overgrown by the luxuriant vegetation of the climate. These fragments of building, occupying a sort of recess of the bay, were hidden by steep banks on each side, and although, in fact, they formed part of the city, yet they were not seen from any part of it, and, embosomed in the manner we have described, did not in turn command any view of the churches, palaces, towers, and fortifications amongst which they lay. The sight of this solitary, and apparently deserted, spot, encumbered with ruins and overgrown with cypress and other trees, situated as it was in the midst of a populous city, had something in it impressive and awful to the imagination. The ruins were of an ancient date, and in the style of a foreign people. The gigantic remains of a portico, the mutilated fragments of statues of great size, but executed in a taste and attitude so narrow and barbaric as to seem perfectly the reverse of the Grecian, and the half defaced hieroglyphics which could be traced on

some part of the decayed sculpture, corroborated the popular account of their origin, which we shall briefly detail.

According to tradition, this had been a temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Cybele, built while the Roman empire was yet heathen, and while Constantinople was still called by the name of Byzantium. It is well known that the superstition of the Egyptians — vulgarly gross in its literal meaning as well as in its mystical interpretation, and peculiarly the foundation of many wild doctrines — was disowned by the principles of general toleration, and the system of polytheism received by Rome, and was excluded by repeated laws from the respect paid by the empire to almost every other religion, however extravagant or absurd. Nevertheless, these Egyptian rites had charms for the curious and the superstitious, and had, after long opposition, obtained a footing in the empire.

Still, although tolerated, the Egyptian priests were rather considered as sorcerers than as pontiffs, and their whole ritual had a nearer relation to magic, in popular estimation, than to any regular system of devotion.

Stained with these accusations, even among the heathen themselves, the worship of Egypt was held in more mortal abhorrence by the Christians than the other and more rational kinds of heathen devotion — that is, if any at all had a right to be termed so. The brutal worship of Apis and Cybele was regarded not only as a pretext for obscene and profligate pleasures, but as having a direct tendency to open and encourage a dangerous commerce with evil spirits, who were supposed to take upon themselves, at these unhallowed altars, the names and characters of these foul deities. Not only, therefore, the temple of Cybele, with its gigantic portico, its huge and inelegant statues, and its fantastic hieroglyphics, was thrown down and defaced when the empire was converted to the Christian faith, but the very ground on which it stood was considered as polluted and unhallowed; and no emperor having yet occupied the site with a Christian church, the place still remained neglected and deserted, as we have described it.

The Varangian Hereward was perfectly acquainted with the evil reputation of the place; and when the negro seemed disposed to advance into the interior of the ruins, he hesitated, and addressed his guide thus: 'Hark thee, my black friend, these huge fantastic images, some having dogs' heads, some cows' heads, and some no heads at all, are not held reverently in popular estimation. Your own colour, also, my comrade, is

greatly too like that of Satan himself to render you an unsuspicious companion amid ruins in which the false spirit, it is said, daily walks his rounds. Midnight and noon are the times, it is rumoured, of his appearance. I will go no farther with you, unless you assign me a fit reason for so doing.'

'In making so childish a proposal,' said the negro, 'you take from me, in effect, all desire to guide you to my master. I thought I spoke to a man of invincible courage, and of that good sense upon which courage is best founded. But your valour only emboldens you to beat a black slave, who has neither strength nor title to resist you; and your courage is not enough to enable you to look without trembling on the dark side of a wall, even when the sun is in the heaven.'

'Thou art insolent,' said Hereward, raising his axe.

'And thou art foolish,' said the negro, 'to attempt to prove thy manhood and thy wisdom by the very mode which gives reason for calling them both in question. I have already said there can be little valour in beating a wretch like me: and no man, surely, who wishes to discover his way would begin by chasing away his guide.'

'I follow thee,' said Hereward, stung with the insinuation of cowardice; 'but if thou leadest me into a snare, thy free talk shall not save thy bones, if a thousand of thy complexion from earth or hell were standing ready to back thee.'

'Thou objectest surely to my complexion,' said the negro; 'how knowest thou that it is, in fact, a thing to be counted and acted upon as matter of reality? Thine own eyes daily apprise thee that the colour of the sky nightly changes from bright to black, yet thou knowest that this is by no means owing to any habitual colour of the heavens themselves. The same change that takes place in the hue of the heavens has existence in the tinge of the deep sea. How canst thou tell but what the difference of my colour from thine own may be owing to some deceptious change of a similar nature — not real in itself, but only creating an apparent reality?'

'Thou mayst have painted thyself, no doubt,' answered the Varangian, upon reflection, 'and thy blackness, therefore, may be only apparent; but I think thy old friend himself could hardly have presented these grinning lips, with the white teeth and flattened nose, so much to the life, unless that peculiarity of Nubian physiognomy, as they call it, had accurately and really an existence; and, to save thee some trouble, my dark friend, I will tell thee that, though thou speakest to an uneducated

Varangian, I am not entirely unskilled in the Grecian art of making subtle words pass upon the hearers instead of reason.'

'Ay?' said the negro, doubtfully, and somewhat surprised; 'and may the slave Diogenes — for so my master has christened me — inquire into the means by which you reached knowledge so unusual?'

'It is soon told,' replied Hereward. 'My countryman, Witikind, being a constable of our bands, retired from active service, and spent the end of a long life in this city of Constantinople. Being past all toils of battle, either those of reality, as you word it, or the pomp and fatigue of the exercising ground, the poor old man, in despair of something to pass his time, attended the lectures of the philosophers.'

'And what did he learn there?' said the negro; 'for a barbarian, grown grey under the helmet, was not, as I think, a very hopeful student in our schools.'

'As much though, I should think, as a menial slave, which I understand to be thy condition,' replied the soldier. 'But I have understood from him that the masters of this idle science make it their business to substitute, in their argumentations, mere words instead of ideas; and as they never agree upon the precise meaning of the former, their disputes can never arrive at a fair or settled conclusion, since they do not agree in the language in which they express them. Their theories, as they call them, are built on the sand, and the wind and tide shall prevail against them.'

'Say so to my master,' answered the black, in a serious tone.

'I will,' said the Varangian; 'and he shall know me as an ignorant soldier, having but few ideas, and those only concerning my religion and my military duty. But out of these opinions I will neither be beaten by a battery of sophisms nor cheated by the arts or the terrors of the friends of heathenism, either in this world or the next.'

'You may speak your mind to him, then, yourself,' said Diogenes. He stepped to one side, as if to make way for the Varangian, to whom he motioned to go forward.

Hereward advanced accordingly, by a half-worn and almost imperceptible path leading through the long rough grass, and, turning round a half-demolished shrine, which exhibited the remains of Apis, the bovine deity, he came immediately in front of the philosopher, Agelastes, who, sitting among the ruins, reposed his limbs on the grass.

CHAPTER VIII

Through the vain webs which puzzle sophists' skill,
Plain sense and honest meaning work their way;
So sink the varying clouds upon the hill,
When the clear dawning brightens into day.

DR. WATTS.

THE old man rose from the ground with alacrity, as Hereward approached. 'My bold Varangian,' he said, 'thou who valuest men and things not according to the false estimate ascribed to them in this world, but to their real importance and actual value, thou art welcome, whatever has brought thee hither — thou art welcome to a place where it is held the best business of philosophy to strip man of his borrowed ornaments, and reduce him to the just value of his own attributes of body and mind, singly considered.'

'You are a courtier, sir,' said the Saxon, 'and, as a permitted companion of the Emperor's Highness, you must be aware that there are twenty times more ceremonies than such a man as I can be acquainted with for regulating the different ranks in society; while a plain man like myself may be well excused from pushing himself into the company of those above him, where he does not exactly know how he should comport himself.'

'True,' said the philosopher; 'but a man like yourself, noble Hereward, merits more consideration in the eyes of a real philosopher than a thousand of those mere insects whom the smiles of a court call into life, and whom its frowns reduce to annihilation.'

'You are yourself, grave sir, a follower of the court,' said Hereward.

'And a most punctilious one,' said Agelastes. 'There is not, I trust, a subject in the empire who knows better the ten thousand punctilios exigible from those of different ranks, and due to different authorities. The man is yet to be born who has seen me take advantage of any more commodious posture

than that of standing in presence of the royal family. But though I use those false scales in society, and so far conform to its errors, my real judgment is of a more grave character, and more worthy of man, as said to be formed in the image of his Creator.'

'There can be small occasion,' said the Varangian, 'to exercise your judgment in any respect upon me, nor am I desirous that any one should think of me otherwise than I am — a poor exile, namely, who endeavours to fix his faith upon Heaven, and to perform his duty to the world he lives in, and to the prince in whose service he is engaged. And now, grave sir, permit me to ask whether this meeting is by your desire, and for what is its purpose? An African slave, whom I met in the public walks, and who calls himself Diogenes, tells me that you desired to speak with me; he hath somewhat the humour of the old scoffer, and so he may have lied. If so, I will even forgive him the beating which I owe his assurance, and make my excuse at the same time for having broken in upon your retirement, which I am totally unfit to share.'

'Diogenes has not played you false,' answered Agelastes; 'he has his humours, as you remarked even now, and with these some qualities also that put him upon a level with those of fairer complexion and better features.'

'And for what,' said the Varangian, 'have you so employed him? Can your wisdom possibly entertain a wish to converse with me?'

'I am an observer of nature and of humanity,' answered the philosopher; 'is it not natural that I should tire of those beings who are formed entirely upon artifice, and long to see something more fresh from the hand of nature?'

'You see not that in me,' said the Varangian: 'the rigour of military discipline, the camp, the centurion, the armour frame a man's sentiments and limbs to them, as the sea-crab is framed to its shell. See one of us, and you see us all.'

'Permit me to doubt that,' said Agelastes, 'and to suppose that, in Hereward, the son of Waltheoff, I see an extraordinary man, although he himself may be ignorant, owing to his modesty, of the rarity of his own good qualities.'

'The son of Waltheoff!' answered the Varangian, somewhat startled. 'Do you know my father's name?'

'Be not surprised,' answered the philosopher, 'at my possessing so simple a piece of information. It has cost me but little trouble to attain it, yet I would gladly hope that the

labour I have taken in that matter may convince you of my real desire to call you friend.'

'It was indeed an unusual compliment,' said Hereward, 'that a man of your knowledge and station should be at the trouble to inquire among the Varangian cohorts concerning the descent of one of their constables. I scarcely think that my commander, the Acolyte himself, would think such knowledge worthy of being collected or preserved.'

'Greater men than he,' said Agelastes, 'certainly would not —— You know one in high office who thinks the names of his most faithful soldiers of less moment than those of his hunting dogs or his hawks, and would willingly save himself the trouble of calling them otherwise than by a whistle.'

'I may not hear this,' answered the Varangian.

'I would not offend you,' said the philosopher, 'I would not even shake your good opinion of the person I allude to; yet it surprises me that such should be entertained by one of your great qualities.'

'A truce with this, grave sir, which is in fact trifling in a person of your character and appearance,' answered the Anglo-Saxon. 'I am like the rocks of my country: the fierce winds cannot shake me, the soft rains cannot melt me, flattery and loud words are alike lost upon me.'

'And it is even for that inflexibility of mind,' replied Agelastes, 'that steady contempt of everything that approaches thee, save in the light of a duty, that I demand, almost like a beggar, that personal acquaintance which thou refusest like a churl.'

'Pardon me,' said Hereward, 'if I doubt this. Whatever stories you may have picked up concerning me, not unexaggerated probably — since the Greeks do not keep the privilege of boasting so entirely to themselves but the Varangians have learned a little of it — you can have heard nothing of me which can authorise your using your present language, excepting in jest.'

'You mistake, my son,' said Agelastes; 'believe me not a person to mix in the idle talk respecting you with your comrades at the ale-cup. Such as I am, I can strike on this broken image of Anubis (here he touched a gigantic fragment of a statue by his side), and bid the spirit who long prompted the oracle descend and once more reanimate the trembling mass. We that are initiated enjoy high privileges: we stamp upon those ruined vaults, and the echo which dwells there

answers to our demand. Do not think that, although I crave thy friendship, I need therefore supplicate thee for information either respecting thyself or others.'

'Your words are wonderful,' said the Anglo-Saxon; 'but by such promising words I have heard that many souls have been seduced from the path of Heaven. My grandsire, Kenelm, was wont to say that the fair words of the heathen philosophy were more hurtful to the Christian faith than the menaces of the heathen tyrants.'

'I knew him,' said Agelastes. 'What avails it whether it was in the body or in the spirit? He was converted from the faith of Woden by a noble monk, and died a priest at the shrine of St. Augustine.'[1]

'True,' said Hereward — 'all this is certain, and I am the rather bound to remember his words now that he is dead and gone. When I hardly knew his meaning, he bid me beware of the doctrine which causeth to err, which is taught by false prophets, who attest their doctrine by unreal miracles.'

'This,' said Agelastes, 'is mere superstition. Thy grandsire was a good and excellent man, but narrow-minded, like other priests; and, deceived by their example, he wished but to open a small wicket in the gate of truth, and admit the world only on that limited scale. Seest thou, Hereward, thy grandsire and most men of religion would fain narrow our intellect to the consideration of such parts of the immaterial world as are essential to our moral guidance here and our final salvation hereafter; but it is not the less true that man has liberty, provided he has wisdom and courage, to form intimacies with beings more powerful than himself, who can defy the bounds of space by which he is circumscribed, and overcome, by their metaphysical powers, difficulties which, to the timid and unlearned, may appear wild and impossible.'

'You talk of a folly,' answered Hereward, 'at which childhood gapes and manhood smiles.'

'On the contrary,' said the sage, 'I talk of a longing wish which every man feels at the bottom of his heart to hold communication with beings more powerful than himself, and who are not naturally accessible to our organs. Believe me, Hereward, so ardent and universal an aspiration had not existed in our bosoms had there not also been means, if steadily and wisely sought, of attaining its accomplishment. I will appeal to thine own heart, and prove to thee, even by a single

[1] At Canterbury.

word, that what I say is truth. Thy thoughts are even now upon a being long absent or dead, and with the name of BERTHA a thousand emotions rush to thy heart, which in thy ignorance thou hadst esteemed furled up for ever, like spoils of the dead hung above a tombstone! Thou startest and changest thy colour: I joy to see by these signs that the firmness and indomitable courage which men ascribe to thee have left the avenues of the heart as free as ever to kindly and to generous affections, while they have barred them against those of fear, uncertainty, and all the caitiff tribe of meaner sensations. I have proffered to esteem thee, and I have no hesitation in proving it. I will tell thee, if thou desirest to know it, the fate of that very Bertha whose memory thou hast cherished in thy breast in spite of thee, amidst the toil of the day and the repose of the night, in the battle and in the truce, when sporting with thy companions in fields of exercise, or attempting to prosecute the study of Greek learning, in which, if thou wouldst advance, I can teach it by a short road.'

While Agelastes thus spoke, the Varangian in some degree recovered his composure, and made answer, though his voice was somewhat tremulous — 'Who thou art, I know not; what thou wouldst with me, I cannot tell; by what means thou hast gathered intelligence of such consequence to me, and of so little to another, I have no conception; but this I know, that by intention or accident thou hast pronounced a name which agitates my heart to its deepest recesses; yet am I a Christian and Varangian, and neither to my God nor to my adopted prince will I willingly stagger in my faith. What is to be wrought by idols or by false deities must be a treason to the real divinity. Nor is it less certain that thou hast let glance some arrows, though the rules of thy allegiance strictly forbid it, at the Emperor himself. Henceforward, therefore, I refuse to communicate with thee, be it for weal or woe. I am the Emperor's waged soldier, and although I affect not the nice precisions of respect and obedience which are exacted in so many various cases and by so many various rules, yet I am his defence, and my battle-axe is his body-guard.'

'No one doubts it,' said the philosopher. 'But art not thou also bound to a nearer dependence upon the great Acolyte, Achilles Tatius?'

'No. He is my general, according to the rules of our service,' answered the Varangian; 'to me he has always shown

himself a kind and good-natured man, and, his dues of rank apart, I may say has deported himself as a friend rather than a commander. He is, however, my master's servant as well as I am; nor do I hold the difference of great amount which the word of a man can give or take away at pleasure.'

'It is nobly spoken,' said Agelastes; 'and you yourself are surely entitled to stand erect before one whom you supersede in courage and in the art of war.'

'Pardon me,' returned the Briton, 'if I decline the attributed compliment, as what in no respect belongs to me. The Emperor chooses his own officers, in respect of their power of serving him as he desires to be served. In this it is likely I might fail; I have said already I owe my Emperor my obedience, my duty, and my service, nor does it seem to me necessary to carry our explanation farther.'

'Singular man!' said Agelastes; 'is there nothing that can move thee but things that are foreign to thyself? The name of thy Emperor and thy commander are no spell upon thee, and even that of the object thou hast loved ——'

Here the Varangian interrupted him.

'I have thought,' he said, 'upon the words thou hast spoken — thou hast found the means to shake my heart-strings, but not to unsettle my principles. I will hold no converse with thee on a matter in which thou canst not have interest. Necromancers, it is said, perform their spells by means of the epithets of the Holiest; no marvel, then, should they use the names of the purest of His creation to serve their unhallowed purposes. I will none of such truckling, disgraceful to the dead perhaps as to the living. Whatever has been thy purpose, old man — for think not thy strange words have passed unnoticed — be thou assured I bear that in my heart which defies alike the seduction of men and of fiends.'

With this the soldier turned and left the ruined temple, after a slight inclination of his head to the philosopher.

Agelastes, after the departure of the soldier, remained alone, apparently absorbed in meditation, until he was suddenly disturbed by the entrance into the ruins of Achilles Tatius. The leader of the Varangians spoke not until he had time to form some result from the philosopher's features. He then said, 'Thou remainest, sage Agelastes, confident in the purpose of which we have lately spoke together?'

'I do,' said Agelastes, with gravity and firmness.

'But,' replied Achilles Tatius, 'thou hast not gained to our

side that proselyte whose coolness and courage would serve us better in our hour of need than the service of a thousand cold-hearted slaves?'

'I have not succeeded,' answered the philosopher.

'And thou dost not blush to own it?' said the imperial officer in reply. 'Thou, the wisest of those who yet pretend to Grecian wisdom, the most powerful of those who still assert the skill by words, signs, names, periapts, and spells to exceed the sphere to which thy faculties belong, hast been foiled thy trade of persuasion, like an infant worsted in debate with its domestic tutor? Out upon thee, that thou canst not sustain in argument the character which thou wouldst so fain assume to thyself!'

'Peace!' said the Grecian. 'I have as yet gained nothing, it is true, over this obstinate and inflexible man; but, Achilles Tatius, neither have I lost. We both stand where yesterday we did, with this advantage on my side, that I have suggested to him such an object of interest as he shall never be able to expel from his mind, until he hath had recourse to me to obtain farther knowledge concerning it. And now let this singular person remain for a time unmentioned; yet trust me, though flattery, avarice, and ambition may fail to gain him, a bait nevertheless remains that shall make him as completely our own as any that is bound within our mystic and inviolable contract. Tell me, then, how go on the affairs of the empire? Does this tide of Latin warriors, so strangely set a[illegible]ving, still rush on to the banks of the Bosphorus? and does Alexius still entertain hopes to diminish and divide the strength of numbers which he could in vain hope to defy?'

'Something further of intelligence has been gained, even within a very few hours,' answered Achilles Tatius. 'Bohemond came to the city with some six or eight light horse, and in a species of disguise. Considering how often he had been the Emperor's enemy, his project was a perilous one. But when is it that these Franks draw back on account of danger? The Emperor perceived at once that the Count was come to see what he might obtain by presenting himself as the very first object of his liberality, and by offering his assistance as mediator with Godfrey of Bouillon and the other princes of the crusade.'

'It is a species of policy,' answered the sage, 'for which he would receive full credit from the Emperor.'

Achilles Tatius proceeded — 'Count Bohemond was discovered

to the imperial court as if it were by mere accident, and he was welcomed with marks of favour and splendour which had never been even mentioned as being fit for any one of the Frankish race. There was no word of ancient enmity or of former wars, no mention of Bohemond as the ancient usurper of Antioch, and the encroacher upon the empire. But thanks to Heaven were returned on all sides, which had sent a faithful ally to the imperial assistance at a moment of such imminent peril.'

'And what said Bohemond?' inquired the philosopher.

'Little or nothing,' said the captain of the Varangians, 'until as I learned from the domestic slave Narses, a large sum of gold had been abandoned to him. Considerable districts were afterwards agreed to be ceded to him, and other advantages granted, on condition he should stand on this occasion the steady friend of the empire and its master. Such was the Emperor's munificence towards the greedy barbarian, that a chamber in the palace was, by chance, as it were, left exposed to his view, containing large quantities of manufactured silks, of jewellers' work, of gold and silver, and other articles of great value. When the rapacious Frank could not forbear some expressions of admiration, he was assured that the contents of the treasure-chamber were his own, provided he valued them as showing forth the warmth and sincerity of his imperial ally towards his friends; and these precious articles were accordingly conveyed to the tent of the Norman leader. By such measures the Emperor must make himself master of Bohemond, both body and soul; for the Franks themselves say it is strange to see a man of undaunted bravery and towering ambition so infected, nevertheless, with avarice, which they term a mean and unnatural vice.'

'Bohemond,' said Agelastes, 'is then the Emperor's for life and death — always, that is, till the recollection of the royal munificence be effaced by a greater gratuity. Alexius, proud as he naturally is of his management with this important chieftain, will no doubt expect to prevail by his counsels on most of the other crusaders, and even on Godfrey of Bouillon himself, to take an oath of submission and fidelity to the Emperor, which, were it not for the sacred nature of their warfare, the meanest gentleman among them would not submit to, were it to be lord of a province. There, then, we rest. A few days must determine what we have to do. An earlier discovery would be destruction.'

'We meet not, then, to-night?' said the Acolyte.

'No,' replied the sage; 'unless we are summoned to tha foolish stage-play or recitation; and then we meet as play things in the hand of a silly woman, the spoiled child of weak-minded parent.'

Tatius then took his leave of the philosopher, and, as i fearful of being seen in each other's company, they left thei solitary place of meeting by different routes. The Varangian Hereward, received, shortly after, a summons from his superior who acquainted him that he should not, as formerly intimated require his attendance that evening.

Achilles then paused, and added — 'Thou hast something on thy lips thou wouldst say to me, which, nevertheless, hesitates to break forth.'

'It is only this,' answered the soldier: 'I have had an interview with the man called Agelastes, and he seems something so different from what he appeared when we last spoke of him, that I cannot forbear mentioning to you what I have seen. He is not an insignificant trifler, whose object it is to raise a laugh at his own expense or that of any other. He is a deep-thinking and far-reaching man, who, for some reason or other, is desirous of forming friends, and drawing a party to himself. Your own wisdom will teach you to beware of him.'

'Thou art an honest fellow, my poor Hereward,' said Achilles Tatius, with an affectation of good-natured contempt. 'Such men as Agelastes do often frame their severest jests in the shape of formal gravity: they will pretend to possess the most unbounded power over elements and elemental spirits, they will make themselves masters of the names and anecdotes best known to those whom they make their sport; and any one who shall listen to them shall, in the words of the divine Homer, only expose himself to a flood of inextinguishable laughter. I have often known him select one of the rawest and most ignorant persons in presence, and to him, for the amusement of the rest, he has pretended to cause the absent to appear, the distant to draw near, and the dead themselves to burst the cerements of the grave. Take care, Hereward, that his arts make not a stain on the credit of one of my bravest Varangians.'

'There is no danger,' answered Hereward. 'I shall not be fond of being often with this man. If he jests upon one subject which he hath mentioned to me, I shall be but too likely to teach him seriousness after a rough manner. And if he is serious in his pretensions in such mystical matters, we should,

according to the faith of my grandfather, Kenelm, do insult to the deceased, whose name is taken in the mouth of a sooth-sayer or impious enchanter. I will not, therefore, again go near this Agelastes, be he wizard or be he impostor.'

'You apprehend me not,' said the Acolyte, hastily — 'you mistake my meaning. He is a man from whom, if he pleases to converse with such as you, you may derive much knowledge, keeping out of the reach of those pretended secret arts, which he will only use to turn thee into ridicule.' With these words, which he himself would perhaps have felt it difficult to reconcile, the leader and his follower parted.

CHAPTER IX

Between the foaming jaws of the white torrent
The skilful artist draws a sudden mound;
By level long he subdivides their strength,
Stealing the waters from their rocky bed,
First to diminish what he means to conquer;
Then, for the residue he forms a road,
Easy to keep, and painful to desert,
And guiding to the end the planner aim'd at.

The Engineer.

IT would have been easy for Alexius, by a course of avowed suspicion, or any false step in the manner of receiving this tumultuary invasion of the European nations, to have blown into a flame the numerous but smothered grievances under which they laboured; and a similar catastrophe would not have been less certain, had he at once abandoned all thoughts of resistance, and placed his hope of safety in surrendering to the multitudes of the West whatsoever they accounted worth taking. The Emperor chose a middle course; and, unquestionably, in the weakness of the Greek empire, it was the only one which would have given him at once safety and a great degree of consequence in the eyes of the Frank invaders, and those of his own subjects. The means with which he acted were of various kinds, and, rather from policy than inclination, were often stained with falsehood or meanness; therefore it follows that the measures of the Emperor resembled those of the snake, who twines himself through the grass, with the purpose of stinging insidiously those whom he fears to approach with the step of the bold and generous lion. We are not, however, writing the history of the crusades, and what we have already said of the Emperor's precautions on the first appearance of Godfrey of Bouillon and his associates may suffice for the elucidation of our story.

About four weeks had now passed over, marked by quarrels and reconcilements between the crusaders and the Grecians of

the empire. The former were, as Alexius's policy dictated, occasionally and individually received with extreme honour, and their leaders loaded with respect and favour; while, from time to time, such bodies of them as sought distant or circuitous routes to the capital were intercepted and cut to pieces by light-armed troops, who easily passed upon their ignorant opponents for Turks, Scythians, or other infidels, and sometimes were actually such, but in the service of the Grecian monarch. Often, too, it happened that, while the more powerful chiefs of the crusade were feasted by the Emperor and his ministers with the richest delicacies, and their thirst slaked with iced wines, their followers were left at a distance, where, intentionally supplied with adulterated flour, tainted provisions, and bad water, they contracted diseases, and died in great numbers, without having once seen a foot of the Holy Land, for the recovery of which they had abandoned their peace, their competence, and their native country. These aggressions did not pass without complaint. Many of the crusading chiefs impugned the fidelity of their allies, exposed the losses sustained by their armies as evils voluntarily inflicted on them by the Greeks, and on more than one occasion the two nations stood opposed to each other on such terms that a general war seemed to be inevitable.

Alexius, however, though obliged to have recourse to every finesse, still kept his ground, and made peace with the most powerful chiefs, under one pretence or other. The actual losses of the crusaders by the sword he imputed to their own aggressions; their misguidance, to accident and to wilfulness; the effects produced on them by the adulterated provisions, to the vehemence of their own appetite for raw fruits and unripened wines. In short, there was no disaster of any kind whatsoever which could possibly befall the unhappy pilgrims but the Emperor stood prepared to prove that it was the natural consequence of their own violence, wilfulness of conduct, or hostile precipitancy.

The chiefs, who were not ignorant of their strength, would not, it was likely, have tamely suffered injuries from a power so inferior to their own, were it not that they had formed extravagant ideas of the wealth of the Eastern empire, which Alexius seemed willing to share with them with an excess of bounty as new to the leaders as the rich productions of the East were tempting to their followers.

The French nobles would perhaps have been the most diffi-

cult to be brought into order when differences arose, but an accident, which the Emperor might have termed providential, reduced the high spirited Count of Vermandois to the situation of a suppliant, when he expected to hold that of a dictator. A fierce tempest surprised his fleet after he set sail from Italy, and he was finally driven on the coast of Greece. Many ships were destroyed, and those troops who got ashore were so much distressed that they were obliged to surrender themselves to the lieutenants of Alexius. So that the Count of Vermandois, so haughty in his bearing when he first embarked, was sent to the court of Constantinople not as a prince, but as a prisoner. In this case, the Emperor instantly set the soldiers at liberty, and loaded them with presents.[1]

Grateful, therefore, for attentions in which Alexius was unremitting, Count Hugh was, by gratitude as well as interest, inclined to join the opinion of those who, for other reasons, desired the subsistence of peace betwixt the crusaders and the empire of Greece. A better principle determined the celebrated Godfrey, Raymond of Tholouse, and some others, in whom devotion was something more than a mere burst of fanaticism. These princes considered with what scandal their whole journey must be stained, if the first of their exploits should be a war upon the Grecian empire, which might justly be called the barrier of Christendom. If it was weak and at the same time rich —if at the same time it invited rapine and was unable to protect itself against it — it was the more their interest and duty, as Christian soldiers, to protect a Christian state whose existence was of so much consequence to the common cause, even when it could not defend itself. It was the wish of these frank-hearted men to receive the Emperor's professions of friendship with such sincere returns of amity, to return his kindness with so much usury, as to convince him that their purpose towards him was in every respect fair and honourable, and that it would be his interest to abstain from every injurious treatment which might induce or compel them to alter their measures towards him.

It was with this accommodating spirit towards Alexius, which, for many different and complicated reasons, had now animated most of the crusaders, that the chiefs consented to a measure which, in other circumstances, they would probably have refused, as undue to the Greeks and dishonourable to themselves. This was the famous resolution that, before crossing

[1] See Mills's *History of the Crusades*, vol. i. [chap. iii.] p. 96.

the Bosphorus to go in quest of that Palestine which they had vowed to regain, each chief of crusaders would acknowledge individually the Grecian Emperor, originally lord paramount of all these regions, as their liege lord and suzerain.

The Emperor Alexius, with trembling joy, beheld the crusaders approach a conclusion to which he had hoped to bribe them rather by interested means than by reasoning, although much might be said why provinces reconquered from the Turks or Saracens should, if recovered from the infidel, become again a part of the Grecian empire, from which they had been rent without any pretence save that of violence.

Though fearful, and almost despairing, of being able to manage the rude and discordant army of haughty chiefs, who were wholly independent of each other, Alexius failed not, with eagerness and dexterity, to seize upon the admission of Godfrey and his compeers, that the Emperor was entitled to the allegiance of all who should war on Palestine, and natural lord paramount of all the conquests which should be made in the course of the expedition. He was resolved to make this ceremony so public, and to interest men's minds in it by such a display of the imperial pomp and munificence, that it should not either pass unknown or be readily forgotten.

An extensive terrace, one of the numerous spaces which extend along the coast of the Propontis, was chosen for the site of the magnificent ceremony. Here was placed an elevated and august throne, calculated for the use of the Emperor alone. On this occasion, by suffering no other seats within view of the pageant, the Greeks endeavoured to secure a point of ceremony peculiarly dear to their vanity, namely, that none of that presence, save the Emperor himself, should be seated. Around the throne of Alexius Comnenus were placed in order, but standing, the various dignitaries of his splendid court, in their different ranks from the Protosebastos and the Cæsar to the Patriarch, splendid as his ecclesiastic robes, and to Agelastes, who, in his simple habit, gave also the necessary attendance. Behind and around the splendid display of the Emperor's court were drawn many dark circles of the exiled Anglo-Saxons. These, by their own desire, were not, on that memorable day, encountred in the silver corslets which were the fashion of an idle court, but sheathed in mail and plate. They desired, they said, to be known as warriors to warriors. This was the more readily granted, as there was no knowing what trifle might infringe a truce between parties so inflammable as were now assembled.

Beyond the Varangians, in much greater numbers, were drawn up the bands of Grecians, or Romans, then known by the title of Immortals, which had been borrowed by the Romans originally from the empire of Persia. The stately forms, lofty crests, and splendid apparel of these guards would have given the foreign princes present a higher idea of their military prowess, had there not occurred in their ranks a frequent indication of loquacity and of motion, forming a strong contrast to the steady composure and death-like silence with which the well-trained Varangians stood in the parade, like statues made of iron.

The reader must then conceive this throne in all the pomp of Oriental greatness, surrounded by the foreign and Roman troops of the empire, and closed on the rear by clouds of light horse, who shifted their places repeatedly, so as to convey an idea of their multitude, without affording the exact means of estimating it. Through the dust which they raised by these evolutions might be seen banners and standards, among which could be discovered, by glances, the celebrated LABARUM,[1] the pledge of conquest to the imperial banners, but whose sacred efficacy had somewhat failed of late days. The rude soldiers of the West, who viewed the Grecian army, maintained that the standards which were exhibited in front of their line were at least sufficient for the array of ten times the number of soldiers.

Far on the right, the appearance of a very large body of European cavalry drawn up on the sea-shore intimated the presence of the crusaders. So great was the desire to follow the example of the chief princes, dukes, and counts, in making the proposed fealty, that the number of independent knights and nobles who were to perform this service seemed very great when collected together for that purpose; for every crusader who possessed a tower and led six lances would have thought himself abridged of his dignity if he had not been called to acknowledge the Grecian Emperor, and hold the lands he should conquer of his throne, as well as Godfrey of Bouillon, or Hugh the Great, Count of Vermandois. And yet, with strange inconsistency, though they pressed to fulfil the homage as that which was paid by greater persons than themselves, they seemed, at the very same time, desirous to find some mode of intimating that the homage which they rendered they felt as an idle degradation, and in fact held the whole show as a mere piece of mockery.

[1] See Note 6.

The order of the procession had been thus settled: — The crusaders, or, as the Grecians called them, the 'counts' — that being the most common title among them — were to advance from the left of their body, and, passing the Emperor one by one, were apprised that, in passing, each was to render to him, in as few words as possible, the homage which had been previously agreed on. Godfrey of Bouillon, his brother Baldwin, Bohemond of Antioch, and several other crusaders of eminence, were the first to perform the ceremony, alighting when their own part was performed, and remaining in attendance by the Emperor's chair, to prevent, by the awe of their presence, any of their numerous associates from being guilty of petulance or presumption during the solemnity. Other crusaders of less degree retained their station near the Emperor, when they had once gained it, out of mere curiosity, or to show that they were as much at liberty to do so as the greater commanders who assumed that privilege.

Thus two great bodies of troops Grecian and European, paused at some distance from each other on the banks of the Bosphorus canal, differing in language, arms, and appearance. The small troops of horse which from time to time issued forth from these bodies resembled the flashes of lightning passing from one thunder-cloud to another, which communicate to each other by such emissaries their overcharged contents. After some halt on the margin of the Bosphorus, the Franks who had performed homage straggled irregularly forward to a quay on the shore, where innumerable galleys and smaller vessels, provided for the purpose, lay with sails and oars prepared to waft the warlike pilgrims across the passage, and place them on that Asia which they longed so passionately to visit, and from which but few of them were likely to return. The gay appearance of the vessels which were to receive them, the readiness with which they were supplied with refreshments, the narrowness of the strait they had to cross, the near approach of that active service which they had vowed and longed to discharge, put the warriors into gay spirits, and songs and music bore chorus to the departing oars.

While such was the temper of the crusaders, the Grecian Emperor did his best through the whole ceremonial to impress on the armed multitude the highest ideas of his own grandeur, and the importance of the occasion which had brought them together. This was readily admitted by the higher chiefs — some because their vanity had been propitiated, some because

their avarice had been gratified, some because their ambition had been inflamed, and a few — a very few, because to remain friends with Alexius was the most probable means of advancing the purposes of their expedition. Accordingly, the great lords, from these various motives, practised a humility which perhaps they were far from feeling, and carefully abstained from all which might seem like irreverence at the solemn festival of the Grecians. But there were very many of a different temper.

Of the great number of counts, lords, and knights under whose variety of banners the crusaders were led to the walls of Constantinople, many were too insignificant to be bribed to this distasteful measure of homage; and these, though they felt it dangerous to oppose resistance, yet mixed their submission with taunts, ridicule, and such contraventions of decorum as plainly intimated that they entertained resentment and scorn at the step they were about to take, and esteemed it as proclaiming themselves vassals to a prince heretic in his faith, limited in the exercise of his boasted power, their enemy when he dared show himself such, and the friend of those only among their number who were able to compel him to be so, and who, though to them an obsequious ally, was to the others, when occasion offered, an insidious and murderous enemy.

The nobles of Frankish origin and descent were chiefly remarkable for their presumptuous contempt of every other nation engaged in the crusade, as well as for their dauntless bravery, and for the scorn with which they regarded the power and authority of the Greek empire. It was a common saying among them that, if the skies should fall, the French crusaders alone were able to hold them up with their lances. The same bold and arrogant disposition showed itself in occasional quarrels with their unwilling hosts, in which the Greeks, notwithstanding all their art, were often worsted; so that Alexius was determined, at all events, to get rid of these intractable and fiery allies, by ferrying them over the Bosphorus with all manner of diligence. To do this with safety, he availed himself of the presence of the Count of Vermandois, Godfrey of Bouillon, and other chiefs of great influence, to keep in order the lesser Frankish knights, who were so numerous and unruly.[1]

Struggling with his feelings of offended pride, tempered by a prudent degree of apprehension, the Emperor endeavoured to receive with complacence a homage tendered in mockery. An

[1] See Mills, vol. i. chap. iii.

incident shortly took place of a character highly descriptive of the nations brought together in so extraordinary a manner, and with such different feelings and sentiments. Several bands of French had passed, in a sort of procession, the throne of the Emperor, and rendered, with some appearance of gravity, the usual homage. On this occasion they bent their knees to Alexius, placed their hands within his, and in that posture paid the ceremonies of feudal fealty. But when it came to the turn of Bohemond of Antioch, already mentioned, to render this fealty, the Emperor, desirous to show every species of honour to this wily person, his former enemy, and now apparently his ally, advanced two or three paces towards the sea-side, where the boats lay as if in readiness for his use.

The distance to which the Emperor moved was very small, and it was assumed as a piece of deference to Bohemond; but it became the means of exposing Alexius himself to a cutting affront, which his guards and subjects felt deeply, as an intentional humiliation. A half-score of horsemen, attendants of the Frankish count who was next to perform the homage, with their lord at their head, set off at full gallop from the right flank of the French squadrons, and arriving before the throne, which was yet empty, they at once halted. The rider at the head of the band was a strong, herculean figure, with a decided and stern countenance, though extremely handsome, looking out from thick black curls. His head was surmounted with a barret cap, while his hands, limbs, and feet were covered with garments of chamois leather, over which he in general wore the ponderous and complete armour of his country. This, however, he had laid aside for personal convenience, though in doing so he evinced a total neglect of the ceremonial which marked so important a meeting. He waited not a moment for the Emperor's return, nor regarded the impropriety of obliging Alexius to hurry his steps back to his throne, but sprung from his gigantic horse, and threw the reins loose, which were instantly seized by one of the attendant pages. Without a moment's hesitation, the Frank seated himself in the vacant throne of the Emperor, and extending his half-armed and robust figure on the golden cushions which were destined for Alexius, he indolently began to caress a large wolf-hound which had followed him, and which, feeling itself as much at ease as its master, reposed its grim form on the carpets of silk and gold damask which tapestried the imperial footstool. The very hound stretched itself with a bold, ferocious insolence, and

seemed to regard no one with respect save the stern knight whom it called master.

The Emperor, turning back from the short space which, as a special mark of favour, he had accompanied Bohemond, beheld with astonishment his seat occupied by this insolent Frank. The bands of the half-savage Varangians who were stationed around would not have hesitated an instant in avenging the insult, by prostrating the violator of their master's throne even in this act of his contempt, had they not been restrained by Achilles Tatius and other officers, who were uncertain what the Emperor would do, and somewhat timorous of taking a resolution for themselves.

Meanwhile, the unceremonious knight spoke aloud, in a speech which, though provincial, might be understood by all to whom the French language was known, while even those who understood it not gathered its interpretation from his tone and manner. 'What churl is this,' he said, 'who has remained sitting stationary like a block of wood or the fragment of a rock, when so many noble knights, the flower of chivalry and muster of gallantry, stand uncovered around among the thrice conquered Varangians?'

A deep, clear accent replied, as if from the bottom of the earth, so like it was to the accents of some being from the other world — 'If the Normans desire battle of the Varangians, they will meet them in the lists man to man, without the poor boast of insulting the Emperor of Greece, who is well known to fight only by the battle-axes of his guard.'

The astonishment was so great when this answer was heard as to affect even the knight whose insult upon the Emperor had occasioned it; and amid the efforts of Achilles to retain his soldiers within the bounds of subordination and silence, a loud murmur seemed to intimate that they would not long remain so. Bohemond returned through the press with a celerity which did not so well suit the dignity of Alexius, and catching the crusader by the arm, he, something between fair means and a gentle degree of force, obliged him to leave the chair of the Emperor, in which he had placed himself so boldly.

'How is it,' said Bohemond, 'noble Count of Paris? Is there one of this great assembly who can see with patience that your name, so widely renowned for valour, is now to be quoted in an idle brawl with hirelings, whose utmost boast it is to bear a mercenary battle-axe in the ranks of the Emperor's

guards? For shame — for shame; do not, for the discredit of Norman chivalry, let it be so!'

'I know not,' said the crusader, rising reluctantly. 'I am not nice in choosing the degree of my adversary, when he bears himself like one who is willing and forward in battle. I am good-natured, I tell thee, Count Bohemond; and Turk or Tartar, or wandering Anglo-Saxon, who only escapes from the chain of the Normans to become the slave of the Greek, is equally welcome to whet his blade clean against my armour, if he desires to achieve such an honourable office.'

The Emperor had heard what passed — had heard it with indignation, mixed with fear; for he imagined the whole scheme of his policy was about to be overturned at once by a premeditated plan of personal affront, and probably an assault upon his person. He was about to call to arms, when, casting his eyes on the right flank of the crusaders, he saw that all remained quiet after the Frank baron had transferred himself from thence. He therefore instantly resolved to let the insult pass, as one of the rough pleasantries of the Franks, since the advance of more troops did not give any symptom of an actual onset.

Resolving on his line of conduct with the quickness of thought, he glided back to his canopy and stood beside his throne, of which, however, he chose not instantly to take possession, least he should give the insolent stranger some ground for renewing and persisting in a competition for it.

'What bold vavasour is this,' said he to Count Baldwin, 'whom, as is apparent from his dignity, I ought to have received seated upon my throne, and who thinks proper thus to vindicate his rank?'

'He is reckoned one of the bravest men in our host,' answered Baldwin, 'though the brave are as numerous there as the sands of the sea. He will himself tell you his name and rank.'

Alexius looked at the vavasour. He saw nothing in his large, well-formed features, lighted by a wild touch of enthusiasm which spoke in his quick eye, that intimated premeditated insult, and was ind[illegible]d to suppose that what had occurred, so contrary to the [illegible] and ceremonial of the Grecian court, was neither an intenti[illegible] affront nor designed as the means of introducing a quarre[illegible] He therefore spoke with comparative ease when he addressed the stranger thus — 'We know not by what dignified name to salute you; but we are aware, from Count Baldwin's information, that we are honoured

in having in our presence one of the bravest knights whom sense of the wrongs done to the Holy Land has brought thu far on his way to Palestine, to free it from its bondage.'

'If you mean to ask my name,' answered the European knight, 'any one of these pilgrims can readily satisfy you, and more gracefully than I can myself, since we use to say in our country that many a fierce quarrel is prevented from being fought out by an untimely disclosure of names, when men who might have fought with the fear of God before their eyes must, when their names are manifested, recognise each other as spiritual allies, by baptism, gossipred, or some such irresistible bond of friendship; whereas, had they fought first, and told their names afterwards, they could have had some assurance of each other's valour, and have been able to view their relationship as an honour to both.'

'Still,' said the Emperor, 'methinks I would know if you, who, in this extraordinary press of knights, seem to assert a precedence to yourself, claim the dignity due to a king or prince?'

'How speak you that?' said the Frank, with a brow somewhat overclouded; 'do you feel that I have not left you unjostled by my advance to these squadrons of yours?'

Alexius hastened to answer, that he felt no particular desire to connect the count with an affront or offence; observing that, in the extreme necessity of the empire, it was no time for him, who was at the helm, to engage in idle or unnecessary quarrels.

The Frankish knight heard him, and answered drily 'Since such are your sentiments, I wonder that you have ever resided long enough within the hearing of the French language to learn to speak it as you do. I would have thought some of the sentiments of the chivalry of the nation, since you are neither a monk nor a woman, would, at the same time with the words of the dialect, have found their way into your heart.'

'Hush, sir count,' said Bohemond, who remained by the Emperor to avert the threatening quarrel. 'It is surely requisite to answer the Emperor with civility; and those who are impatient for warfare will have infidels enough to wage it with. He only demanded your name and lineage, which you of all men can have least objection to disclose.'

'I know not if it will interest this prince, or emperor, as you term him,' answered the Frank count; 'but all the account I can give of myself is this: In the midst of one of the vast

forests which occupy the centre of France, my native country, there stands a chapel, sunk so low into the ground that it seems as if it were become decrepit by its own great age. The image of the Holy Virgin who presides over its altar is called by all men Our Lady of the Broken Lances, and is accounted through the whole kingdom the most celebrated for military adventures. Four beaten roads, each leading from an opposite point in the compass, meet before the principal door of the chapel; and ever and anon, as a good knight arrives at this place, he passes in to the performance of his devotions in the chapel, having first sounded his horn three times, till ash and oak-tree quiver and ring. Having then kneeled down to his devotions, he seldom arises from the mass of Her of the Broken Lances but there is attending on his leisure some adventurous knight ready to satisfy the new-comer's desire of battle. This station have I held for a month and more against all comers, and all gave me fair thanks for the knightly manner of quitting myself towards them, except one, who had the evil hap to fall from his horse, and did break his neck: and another, who was struck through the body, so that the lance came out behind his back about a cloth-yard, all dripping with blood. Allowing for such accidents, which cannot easily be avoided, my opponents parted with me with fair acknowledgment of the grace I had done them.'

'I conceive, sir knight,' said the Emperor, 'that a form like yours, animated by the courage you display, is likely to find few equals even among your adventurous countrymen; far less among men who are taught that to cast away their lives in a senseless quarrel among themselves is to throw away, like a boy, the gift of Providence.'

'You are welcome to your opinion,' said the Frank, somewhat contemptuously; 'yet I assure you, if you doubt that our gallant strife was unmixed with sullenness and anger, and that we hunt not the hart or the boar with merrier hearts in the evening than we discharge our task of chivalry by the morn had arisen, before the portal of the old chapel, you do us foul injustice.'

'With the Turks you will not enjoy this amiable exchange of courtesies,' answered Alexius. 'Wherefore I would advise you neither to stray far into the van nor into the rear, but abide by the standard, where the best infidels make their efforts, and the best knights are required to repel them.'

'By Our Lady of the Broken Lances,' said the crusader, 'I

would not that the Turks were more courteous than they are Christian, and am well pleased that unbeliever and heathen hound are a proper description for the best of them, as being traitor alike to their God and to the laws of chivalry: and devoutly do I trust that I shall meet with them in the front rank of our army, beside our standard, or elsewhere, and have an open field to do my devoir against them, both as the enemies of Our Lady and the holy saints and as, by their evil customs, more expressly my own. Meanwhile, you have time to seat yourself and receive my homage, and I will be bound to you for despatching this foolish ceremony with as little waste and delay of time as the occasion will permit.'

The Emperor hastily seated himself, and received into his the sinewy hands of the crusader, who made the acknowledgment of his homage, and was then guided off by Count Baldwin, who walked with the stranger to the ships, and then, apparently well pleased at seeing him in the course of going on board, returned back to the side of the Emperor.

'What is the name,' said the Emperor, 'of that singular and assuming man?'

'It is Robert Count of Paris,' answered Baldwin, 'accounted one of the bravest peers who stands around the throne of France.'

After a moment's recollection, Alexius Comnenus issued orders that the ceremonial of the day should be discontinued, afraid, perhaps, lest the rough and careless humour of the strangers should produce some new quarrel. The crusaders were led, nothing loth, back to palaces in which they had already been hospitably received, and readily resumed the interrupted feast from which they had been called to pay their homage. The trumpets of the various leaders blew the recall of the few troops of an ordinary character who were attendant, together with the host of knights and leaders, who, pleased with the indulgences provided for them, and obscurely foreseeing that the passage of the Bosphorus would be the commencement of their actual suffering, rejoiced in being called to the hither side.

It was not probably intended, but the hero, as he might be styled, of the tumultuous day, Count Robert of Paris, who was already on his road to embarkation on the strait, was disturbed in his purpose by the sound of recall which was echoed around: nor could Bohemond, Godfrey, or any who took upon him to explain the signal, alter his resolution of returning to Constantinople.

He laughed to scorn the threatened displeasure of the Emperor, and seemed to think there would be a peculiar pleasure in braving Alexius at his own board, or, at least, that nothing could be more indifferent than whether he gave offence or not.

To Godfrey of Bouillon, to whom he showed some respect, he was still far from paying deference; and that sagacious prince, having used every argument which might shake his purpose of returning to the imperial city, to the very point of making it a quarrel with him in person, at length abandoned him to his own discretion, and pointed him out to the Count of Tholouse, as he passed, as a wild knight-errant, incapable of being influenced by anything save his own wayward fancy. 'He brings not five hundred men to the crusade,' said Godfrey; 'and I dare be sworn, that even in this, the very outset of the undertaking, he knows not where these five hundred men are, and how their wants are provided for. There is an eternal trumpet in his ear sounding to assault, nor has he room or time to hear a milder or more rational signal. See how he strolls along yonder, the very emblem of an idle school-boy, broke out of the school-bounds upon a holyday, half animated by curiosity and half by love of mischief.'

'And,' said Raymond Count of Tholouse, 'with resolution sufficient to support the desperate purpose of the whole army of devoted crusaders. And yet so passionate a Rodomont is Count Robert, that he would rather risk the success of the whole expedition than omit an opportunity of meeting a worthy antagonist *en champ clos*, or lose, as he terms it, a chance of worshipping Our Lady of the Broken Lances. Who are you with whom he has now met, and who are apparently walking, or rather strolling, in the same way with him, back to Constantinople?'

'An armed knight, brilliantly equipped, yet of something less than knightly stature,' answered Godfrey. 'It is, I suppose, the celebrated lady who won Robert's heart in the lists of battle, by bravery and valour equal to his own; and the pilgrim form in the long vestments may be their daughter or niece.'

'A singular spectacle, worthy knight,' said the Count of Tholouse, 'do our days present to us, to which we have had nothing similar since Gaita,[1] wife of Robert Guiscard, first took upon her to distinguish herself by manly deeds of emprise, and

[1] See Note 7.

rival her husband, as well in the front of battle as at the dancing-room or banquet.'

'Such is the custom of this pair, most noble knight,' answered another crusader, who had joined them, 'and Heaven pity the poor man who has no power to keep domestic peace by an appeal to the stronger hand!'

'Well,' replied Raymond, 'if it be rather a mortifying reflection that the lady of our love is far past the bloom of youth, it is a consolation that she is too old-fashioned to beat us, when we return back with no more of youth or manhood than a long crusade has left. But come, follow on the road to Constantinople, and in the rear of this most doughty knight.'

CHAPTER X

These were wild times — the antipodes of ours:
Ladies were there, who oftener saw themselves
In the broad lustre of a foeman's shield
Than in a mirror, and who rather sought
To match themselves in battle than in dalliance
To meet a lover's onset. But though Nature
Was outraged thus, she was not overcome.

Feudal Times.

BRENHILDA, Countess of Paris, was one of those stalwart dames who willingly hazarded themselves in the front of battle, which, during the first crusade, was as common as it was possible for a very unnatural custom to be, and, in fact, gave the real instances of the Marphisas and Bradamantes, whom the writers of romance delighted to paint, assigning them sometimes the advantage of invulnerable armour, or a spear whose thrust did not admit of being resisted, in order to soften the improbability of the weaker sex being frequently victorious over the male part of the creation.

But the spell of Brenhilda was of a more simple nature, and rested chiefly in her great beauty.

From a girl, she despised the pursuits of her sex; and they who ventured to become suitors for the hand of the young Lady of Aspramonte, to which warlike fief she had succeeded, and which perhaps encouraged her in her fancy, received for answer, that they must first merit it by their good behaviour in the lists. The father of Brenhilda was dead; her mother was of a gentle temper, and easily kept under management by the young lady herself.

Brenhilda's numerous suitors readily agreed to terms which were too much according to the manners of the age to be disputed. A tournament was held at the Castle of Aspramonte, in which one half of the gallant assembly rolled headlong before their successful rivals, and withdrew from the lists mortified and disappointed. The successful party among the suitors

were expected to be summoned to joust among themselves. But they were surprised at being made acquainted with the lady's further will. She aspired to wear armour herself, to wield a lance, and back a steed, and prayed the knights that they would permit a lady, whom they professed to honour so highly, to mingle in their games of chivalry. The young knights courteously received their young mistress in the lists, and smiled at the idea of her holding them triumphantly against so many gallant champions of the other sex. But the vassals and old servants of the count, her father, smiled to each other, and intimated a different result than the gallants anticipated. The knights who encountered the fair Brenhilda were one by one stretched on the sand; nor was it to be denied that the situation of tilting with one of the handsomest women of the time was an extremely embarrassing one. Each youth was bent to withhold his charge in full volley, to cause his steed to swerve at the full shock, or in some other way to flinch from doing the utmost which was necessary to gain the victory, lest, in so gaining it, he might cause irreparable injury to the beautiful opponent he tilted with. But the Lady of Aspramonte was not one who could be conquered by less than the exertion of the whole strength and talents of the victor. The defeated suitors departed from the lists the more mortified at their discomfiture, because Robert of Paris arrived at sunset, and, understanding what was going forward, sent his name to the barriers, as that of a knight who would willingly forego the reward of the tournament, in case he had the fortune to gain it, declaring, that neither lands nor ladies' charms were what he came thither to seek. Brenhilda, piqued and mortified, chose a new lance, mounted her best steed, and advanced into the lists as one determined to avenge upon the new assailant's brow the slight of her charms which he seemed to express. But whether her displeasure had somewhat interfered with her usual skill, or whether she had, like others of her sex, felt a partiality towards one whose heart was not particularly set upon gaining hers, or whether, as is often said on such occasions, her fated hour was come, so it was that Count Robert tilted with his usual address and good fortune. Brenhilda of Aspramonte was unhorsed and unhelmed, and stretched on the earth, and the beautiful face, which faded from very red to deadly pale before the eyes of the victor, produced its natural effect in raising the value of his conquest. He would, in conformity with his resolution, have left the castle, after having mortified

the vanity of the lady; but her mother opportunely interposed, and, when she had satisfied herself that no serious injury had been sustained by the young heiress, she returned her thanks to the stranger knight who had taught her daughter a lesson, which, she trusted, she would not easily forget. Thus tempted to do what he secretly wished, Count Robert gave ear to those sentiments which naturally whispered to him to be in no hurry to withdraw.

He was of the blood of Charlemagne, and, what was still of more consequence in the young lady's eyes, one of the most renowned of Norman knights in that jousting day. After a residence of ten days in the Castle of Aspramonte, the bride and bridegroom set out, for such was Count Robert's will, with a competent train, to Our Lady of the Broken Lances, where it pleased him to be wedded. Two knights, who were waiting to do battle, as was the custom of the place, were rather disappointed at the nature of the cavalcade, which seemed to interrupt their purpose. But greatly were they surprised when they received a cartel from the betrothed couple, offering to substitute their own persons in the room of other antagonists, and congratulating themselves in commencing their married life in a manner so consistent with that which they had hitherto led. They were victorious as usual: and the only persons having occasion to rue the complaisance of the Count and his bride were the two strangers, one of whom broke an arm in the rencontre and the other dislocated a collar-bone.

Count Robert's course of knight-errantry did not seem to be in the least intermitted by his marriage; on the contrary, when he was called upon to support his renown, his wife was often known also in military exploits, nor was she inferior to him in thirst after fame. They both assumed the cross at the same time, that being then the prevailing order in Europe.

The Countess Brenhilda was [illegible] and-twenty years old, with as much beauty as can well fall to the share of an amazon. A figure of the largest feminine size was surmounted by a noble countenance, to which even repeated warlike toils had not given more than a sunny hue, relieved by the dazzling whiteness of such parts of her face as were not usually displayed.

As Alexius gave orders that his retinue should return to Constantinople, he spoke in private to the Follower, Achilles Tatius. The satrap answered with a submissive bend of the head, and separated with a few attendants from the main body

of the Emperor's train. The principal road to the city was, c course, filled with the troops, and with the numerous crowds c spectators, all of whom were inconvenienced in some degree b the dust and heat of the weather.

Count Robert of Paris had embarked his horses on board c ship, and all his retinue, except an old squire or valet of hi own and an attendant of his wife. He felt himself more in commoded in this crowd than he desired, especially as his wif shared it with him, and began to look among the scattere trees which fringed the shores down almost to the tide-mark to see if he could discern any bye-path which might carry them more circuitously, but more pleasantly, to the city, and afford them at the same time, what was their principal object in the East, strange sights or adventures of chivalry. A broad and beaten path seemed to promise them all the enjoyment which shade could give in a warm climate. The ground through which it wound its way was beautifully broken by the appear ance of temples, churches, and kiosks, and here and there a fountain distributed its silver produce, like a benevolent indi vidual, who, self-denying to himself, is liberal to all others who are in necessity. The distant sound of the martial music still regaled their way; and, at the same time, as it detained the populace on the highroad, prevented the strangers from becom ing incommoded with fellow-travellers.

Rejoicing in the abated heat of the day, wondering, at the same time, at the various kinds of architecture, the strange features of the landscape, or accidental touches of manners exhibited by those who met or passed them upon their journey, they strolled easily onwards. One figure particularly caught the attention of the Countess Brenhilda. This was an old man of great stature, engaged, apparently, so deeply with the roll of parchment which he held in his hand, that he paid no atten tion to the objects which were passing around him. Deep thought appeared to reign on his brow, and his eye was of that piercing kind which seems designed to search and winnow the frivolous from the edifying part of human discussion, and limit its inquiry to the last. Raising his eyes slowly from the parch ment on which he had been gazing, the look of Agelastes — for it was the sage himself — encountered those of Count Robert and his lady, and addressing them with the kindly epithet of 'my children,' he asked if they had missed their road, or whether there was anything in which he could do them any pleasure.

'We are strangers, father,' was the answer, 'from a distant

country, and belonging to the army which has passed hither upon pilgrimage; one object brings us here in common, we hope, with all that host. We desire to pay our devotions where the great ransom was paid for us, and to free, by our good swords, enslaved Palestine from the usurpation and tyranny of the infidel. When we have said this, we have announced our highest human motive. Yet Robert of Paris and his Countess would not willingly set their foot on a land save what should resound its echo. They have not been accustomed to move in silence upon the face of the earth, and they would purchase an eternal life of fame, though it were at the price of mortal existence.'

'You seek, then, to barter safety for fame,' said Agelastes, 'though you may, perchance, throw death into the scale by which you hope to gain it?'

'Assuredly,' said Count Robert; 'nor is there one wearing such a belt as this to whom such a thought is stranger.'

'And, as I understand,' said Agelastes, 'your lady shares with your honourable self in these valorous resolutions? Can this be?'

'You may undervalue my female courage, father, if such is your will,' said the Countess; 'but I speak in presence of a witness who can attest the truth when I say, that a man of half your years had not doubted the truth with impunity.'

'Nay, Heaven protect me from the lightning of your eyes,' said Agelastes, 'whether in anger or in scorn. I bear an ægis about myself against what I should else have feared. But age, with its incapacities, brings also its apologies. Perhaps, indeed, it is one like me whom you seek to find, and in that case I should be happy to render to you such services as it is my duty to offer to all worthy knights.'

'I have already said,' replied Count Robert, 'that, after the accomplishment of my vow' — he looked upwards and crossed himself — 'there is nothing on earth to which I am more bound than to celebrate my name in arms as becomes a valiant cavalier. When men die obscurely, they die for ever. Had my ancestor Charles never left the paltry banks of the Saale, he had not now been much better known than any vine-dresser who wielded his pruning-hook in the same territories. But he bore him like a brave man, and his name is deathless in the memory of the worthy.'

'Young man,' said the old Grecian, 'although it is but seldom that such as you, whom I was made to serve and to

value, visit this country, it is not the less true that I am we
qualified to serve you in the matter which you have so muc
at heart. My acquaintance with nature has been so perfec
and so long, that, during its continuance, she has disappeare
and another world has been spread before me, in which she ha
but little to do. Thus the curious stores which I have as
sembled are beyond the researches of other men, and not to b
laid before those whose deeds of valour are to be bounded b
the ordinary probabilities of every-day nature. No romance
of your romantic country ever devised such extraordinar
adventures out of his own imagination, and to feed the idl
wonder of those who sat listening around, as those which
know, not of idle invention, but of real positive existence, wit
the means of achieving and accomplishing the conditions o
each adventure.'

'If such be your real profession,' said the French count
'you have met one of those whom you chiefly search for: no
will my Countess and I stir farther upon our road until you
have pointed out to us some one of those adventures which i
is the business of errant-knights to be industrious in seeking
out.'

So saying, he sat down by the side of the old man; and his
lady, with a degree of reverence which had something in it
almost diverting, followed his example.

'We have fallen right, Brenhilda,' said Count Robert: 'our
guardian angel has watched his charge carefully. Here have
we come among an ignorant set of pedants, chattering their
absurd language, and holding more important the least look
that a cowardly emperor can give than the best blow that a
good knight can deal. Believe me, I was wellnigh thinking
that we had done ill to take the cross — God forgive such an
impious doubt! Yet here, when we were even despairing to
find the road to fame, we have met with one of those excellent
men whom the knights of yore were wont to find sitting by
springs, by crosses, and by altars, ready to direct the wander-
ing knight where fame was to be found. Disturb him not, my
Brenhilda,' said the Count, 'but let him recall to himself his
stories of the ancient time, and thou shalt see he will enrich us
with the treasures of his information.'

'If,' replied Agelastes, after some pause, 'I have waited for
a longer term than human life is granted to most men, I shall
still be overpaid by dedicating what remains of existence to the
service of a pair so devoted to chivalry. What first occurs to

me is a story of our Greek country, so famous in adventures, and which I shall briefly detail to you : —

'Afar hence, in our renowned Grecian Archipelago, amid storms and whirlpools, rocks which, changing their character, appear to precipitate themselves against each other, and billows that are never in a pacific state, lies the rich island of Zulichium, inhabited, notwithstanding its wealth, by a very few natives, who live only upon the sea-coast. The inland part of the island is one immense mountain, or pile of mountains, amongst which, those who dare approach near enough may, we are assured, discern the moss-grown and antiquated towers and pinnacles of a stately but ruinous castle, the habitation of the sovereign of the island, in which she has been enchanted for a great many years.

'A bold knight, who came upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, made a vow to deliver this unhappy victim of pain and misery, feeling, with justice, vehemently offended that the fiends of darkness should exercise any authority near the Holy Land, which might be termed the very fountain of light. Two of the oldest inhabitants of the island undertook to guide him as near to the main gate as they durst, nor did they approach it more closely than the length of a bow-shot. Here, then, abandoned to himself, the brave Frank set forth upon his enterprise, with a stout heart, and Heaven alone to friend. The fabric which he approached showed, by its gigantic size and splendour of outline, the power and wealth of the potentate who had erected it. The brazen gates unfolded themselves as if with hope and pleasure ; and aerial voices swept around the spires and turrets, congratulating the genius of the place, it might be, upon the expected approach of its deliverer.

'The knight passed on, not unmoved with wonder, though untainted by fear ; and the Gothic splendours which he saw were of a kind highly to exalt his idea of the beauty of the mistress for whom a prison-house had been so richly decorated. Guards there were in Eastern dress and arms, upon bulwark and buttress, in readiness, it appeared, to bend their bows ; but the warriors were motionless and silent, and took no more notice of the armed step of the knight than if a monk or hermit had approached their guarded post. They were living, and yet, as to all power and sense, they might be considered among the dead. If there was truth in the old tradition, the sun had shone and the rain had fallen upon them for more than four hundred changing seasons, without their being sensible of the

genial warmth of the one or the coldness of the other. Like the Israelites in the desert, their shoes had not decayed, nor their vestments waxed old. As Time left them, so and without alteration was he again to find them.' The philosopher began now to recall what he had heard of the cause of their enchantment.

'The sage to whom this potent charm is imputed was one of the Magi who followed the tenets of Zoroaster. He had come to the court of this youthful princess, who received him with every attention which gratified vanity could dictate, so that in a short time her awe of this grave personage was lost in the sense of ascendency which her beauty gave her over him. It was no difficult matter — in fact it happens every day — for the beautiful woman to lull the wise man into what is not unaptly called a fool's paradise. The sage was induced to attempt feats of youth which his years rendered ridiculous: he could command the elements, but the common course of nature was beyond his power. When, therefore, he exerted his magic strength, the mountains bent and the seas receded; but when the philosopher attempted to lead forth the Princess of Zulichium in the youthful dance, youths and maidens turned their heads aside lest they should make too manifest the ludicrous ideas with which they were impressed.

'Unhappily, as the aged, even the wisest of them, will forget themselves, so the young naturally enter into an alliance to spy out, ridicule, and enjoy their foibles. Many were the glances which the Princess sent among her retinue, intimating the nature of the amusement which she received from the attentions of her formidable lover. In process of time, she lost her caution, and a glance was detected, expressing to the old man the ridicule and contempt in which he had been all along held by the object of his affections. Earth has no passion so bitter as love converted to hatred; and while the sage bitterly regretted what he had done, he did not the less resent the light-hearted folly of the Princess by whom he had been duped.

'If, however, he was angry, he possessed the art to conceal it. Not a word, not a look expressed the bitter disappointment which he had received. A shade of melancholy, or rather gloom, upon his brow alone intimated the coming storm. The Princess became somewhat alarmed; she was, besides, extremely good-natured, nor had her intentions of leading the old man into what would render him ridiculous been so accurately planned with malice prepense as they were the effect of acci-

dent and chance. She saw the pain which he suffered, and thought to end it by going up to him, when about to retire, and kindly wishing him good-night.

'"You say well, daughter," said the sage, "good-night; but who, of the numbers who hear me, shall say good-morning?"

'The speech drew little attention, although two or three persons to whom the character of the sage was known fled from the island that very night, and by their report made known the circumstances attending the first infliction of this extraordinary spell on those who remained within the castle. A sleep like that of death fell upon them, and was not removed. Most of the inhabitants left the island; the few who remained were cautious how they approached the castle, and watched until some bold adventurer should bring that happy awakening which the speech of the sorcerer seemed in some degree to intimate.

'Never seemed there a fairer opportunity for that awakening to take place than when the proud step of Artavan de Hautlieu was placed upon those enchanted courts. On the left lay the palace and donjon-keep; but the right, more attractive, seemed to invite to the apartment of the women. At a side door reclined on a couch two guards of the haram, with their naked swords grasped in their hands, and features fiendishly contorted between sleep and dissolution seemed to menace death to any who should venture to approach. This threat deterred not Artavan de Hautlieu. He approached the entrance, when the doors, like those of the great entrance to the castle, made themselves instantly accessible to him. A guard-room of the same effeminate soldiers received him, nor could the strictest examination have discovered to him whether it was sleep or death which arrested the eyes that seemed to look upon and prohibit his advance. Unheeding the presence of these ghostly sentinels, Artavan pressed forward into an inner apartment, where female slaves of the most distinguished beauty were visible in the attitude of those who had already assumed their dress for the night. There was much in this scene which might have arrested so young a pilgrim as Artavan of Hautlieu: but his heart was fixed upon achieving the freedom of the beautiful princess, nor did he suffer himself to be withdrawn from that object by any inferior consideration. He passed on, therefore, to a little ivory door, which, after a moment's pause, as if in maidenly hesitation, gave way like the rest, and yielded access to the sleeping-

apartment of the Princess herself. A soft light, resembli
that of evening, penetrated into a chamber where everythi
seemed contrived to exalt the luxury of slumber. The hea
of cushions which formed a stately bed seemed rather to
touched than impressed by the form of a nymph of fiftee
the renowned Princess of Zulichium.'

'Without interrupting you, good father,' said the Counte
Brenhilda, 'it seems to me that we can comprehend the pictu
of a woman asleep without much dilating upon it, and that suc
a subject is little recommended either by our age or by yours.'

'Pardon me, noble lady,' answered Agelastes, 'the mo
approved part of my story has ever been this passage, an
while I now suppress it in obedience to your command, bea
notice, I pray you, that I sacrifice the most beautiful part
the tale.'

'Brenhilda,' added the Count, 'I am surprised you think
interrupting a story which has hitherto proceeded with so muc
fire; the telling of a few words more or less will surely have
much greater influence upon the sense of the narrative tha
such an addition can possibly possess over our sentiments
action.'

'As you will,' said his lady, throwing herself carelessly bac
upon the seat; 'but methinks the worthy father protracts
this discourse till it becomes of a nature more trifling tha
interesting.'

'Brenhilda,' said the Count, 'this is the first time I have
remarked in you a woman's weakness.'

'I may as well say, Count Robert, that it is the first time,'
answered Brenhilda, 'that you have shown to me the incon-
stancy of your sex.'

'Gods and goddesses,' said the philosopher, 'was ever known
a quarrel more absurdly founded! The Countess is jealous of
one whom her husband probably never will see, nor is there
any prospect that the Princess of Zulichium will be hereafter
better known to the modern world than if the curtain hung
before her tomb.'

'Proceed,' said Count Robert of Paris; 'if Sir Artavan of
Hautlieu has not accomplished the enfranchisement of the
Princess of Zulichium, I make a vow to Our Lady of the
Broken Lances ——.'

'Remember,' said his lady, interfering, 'that you are already
under a vow to free the Sepulchre of God; and to that, me
thinks, all lighter engagements might give place.'

'Well, lady — well,' said Count Robert, but half satisfied with this interference, 'I will not engage myself, you may be assured, on any adventure which may claim precedence of the enterprise of the Holy Sepulchre, to which we are all bound.'

'Alas!' said Agelastes, 'the distance of Zulichium from the speediest route to the sepulchre is so small, that ——'

'Worthy father,' said the Countess, 'we will, if it pleases you, hear your tale to an end, and then determine what we will do. We Norman ladies, descendants of the old Germans, claim a voice with our lords in the council which precedes the battle, nor has our assistance in the conflict been deemed altogether useless.'

The tone in which this was spoken conveyed an awkward innuendo to the philosopher, who began to foresee that the guidance of the Norman knight would be more difficult than he had foreseen, while his consort remained by his side. He took up, therefore, his oratory on somewhat a lower key than before, and avoided those warm descriptions which had given such offence to the Countess Brenhilda.

'Sir Artavan de Hautlieu, says the story, considered in what way he should accost the sleeping damsel, when it occurred to him in what manner the charm would be most likely to be reversed. I am in your judgment, fair lady, if he judged wrong in resolving that the method of his address should be a kiss upon the lips.'

The colour of Brenhilda was somewhat heightened, but she did not deem the observation worthy of notice.

'Never had so innocent an action,' continued the philosopher, 'an effect more horrible. The delightful light of a summer evening was instantly changed into a strange lurid hue, which, infected with sulphur, seemed to breathe suffocation through the apartment. The rich hangings and splendid furniture of the chamber, the very walls themselves, were changed into huge stones tossed together at random, like the inside of a wild beast's den; nor was the den without an inhabitant. The beautiful and innocent lips to which Artavan de Hautlieu had approached his own were now changed into the hideous and bizarre form and bestial aspect of a fiery dragon. A moment she hovered upon the wing, and it is said, had Sir Artavan found courage to repeat his salute three times, he would then have remained master of all the wealth and of the disenchanted princess. But the opportunity was lost, and the dragon, or

the creature who seemed such, sailed out at a side window upon its broad pennons, uttering loud wails of disappointment.'

Here ended the story of Agelastes. 'The Princess,' he said, 'is still supposed to abide her doom in the Island of Zulichium, and several knights have undertaken the adventure; but I know not whether it was the fear of saluting the sleeping maiden, or that of approaching the dragon into which she was transformed, but so it is, the spell remains unachieved. I know the way, and if you say the word, you may be to-morrow on the road to the castle of enchantment.'

The Countess heard this proposal with the deepest anxiety, for she knew that she might, by opposition, determine her husband irrevocably upon following out the enterprise. She stood therefore with a timid and bashful look, strange in a person whose bearing was generally so dauntless, and prudently left it to the uninfluenced mind of Count Robert to form the resolution which should best please him.

'Brenhilda,' he said, taking her hand, 'fame and honour are dear to thy husband as ever they were to knight who buckled a brand upon his side. Thou hast done, perhaps, I may say, for me what I might in vain have looked for from ladies of thy condition; and therefore thou mayst well expect a casting voice in such points of deliberation. Why dost thou wander by the side of a foreign and unhealthy shore, instead of the banks of the lovely Seine? Why dost thou wear a dress unusual to thy sex? Why dost thou seek death, and think it little, in comparison of shame? Why? but that the Count of Paris may have a bride worthy of him. Dost thou think that this affection is thrown away? No, by the saints! Thy knight repays it as he best ought, and sacrifices to thee every thought which thy affection may less than entirely approve.'

Poor Brenhilda, confused as she was by the various emotions with which she was agitated, now in vain endeavoured to maintain the heroic deportment which her character as an amazon required from her. She attempted to assume the proud and lofty look which was properly her own, but, failing in the effort, she threw herself into the Count's arms, hung round his neck, and wept like a village maiden whose true love is pressed for the wars. Her husband, a little ashamed, while he was much moved, by this burst of affection in one to whose character it seemed an unusual attribute, was, at the same time, pleased and proud that he could have awakened an

affection so genuine and so gentle in a soul so high-spirited and so unbending.

'Not thus,' he said, 'my Brenhilda! I would not have it thus, either for thine own sake or for mine. Do not let this wise old man suppose that thy heart is made of the malleable stuff which forms that of other maidens; and apologise to him, as may well become thee, for having prevented my undertaking the adventure of Zulichium, which he recommends.'

It was not easy for Brenhilda to recover herself, after having afforded so notable an instance how nature can vindicate her rights, with whatever rigour she may have been disciplined and tyrannised over. With a look of ineffable affection, she disjoined herself from her husband, still keeping hold of his hand, and turning to the old man with a countenance in which the half-effaced tears were succeeded by smiles of pleasure and of modesty, she spoke to Agelastes as she would to a person whom she respected, and towards whom she had some offence to atone. 'Father,' she said, respectfully, 'be not angry with me that I should have been an obstacle to one of the best knights that ever spurred steed undertaking the enterprise of thine enchanted princess; but the truth is that, in our land, where knighthood and religion agree in permitting only one lady love, and one lady wife, we do not quite so willingly see our husbands run into danger, especially of that kind where lonely ladies are the parties relieved — and — and kisses are the ransom paid. I have as much confidence in my Robert's fidelity as a lady can have in a loving knight, but still ——'

'Lovely lady,' said Agelastes, who, notwithstanding his highly artificial character, could not help being moved by the simple and sincere affection of the handsome young pair, 'you have done no evil. The state of the Princess is no worse than it was, and there cannot be a doubt that the knight fated to relieve her will appear at the destined period.'

The Countess smiled sadly, and shook her head. 'You do not know,' she said, 'how powerful is the aid of which I have unhappily deprived this unfortunate lady, by a jealousy which I now feel to have been alike paltry and unworthy; and, such is my regret, that I could find in my heart to retract my opposition to Count Robert's undertaking this adventure.' She looked at her husband with some anxiety, as one that had made an offer she would not willingly see accepted, and did not recover her courage until he said decidedly, 'Brenhilda, that may not be.'

'And why, then, may not Brenhilda herself take the adventure,' continued the Countess, 'since she can neither fear the charms of the Princess nor the terrors of the dragon?'

'Lady,' said Agelastes, 'the Princess must be awakened by the kiss of love, and not by that of friendship.'

'A sufficient reason,' said the Countess, smiling, 'why a lady may not wish her lord to go forth upon an adventure of which the conditions are so regulated.'

'Noble minstrel, or herald, or by whatever name this country calls you,' said Count Robert, 'accept a small remuneration for an hour pleasantly spent, though spent, unhappily, in vain. I should make some apology for the meanness of my offering, but French knights, you may have occasion to know, are more full of fame than of wealth.'

'Not for that, noble sir,' replied Agelastes, 'would I refuse your munificence: a besant from your worthy hand or that of your noble-minded lady were centupled in its value by the eminence of the persons from whom it came. I would hang it round my neck by a string of pearls, and when I came into the presence of knights and of ladies I would proclaim that this addition to my achievement of armorial distinction was bestowed by the renowned Count Robert of Paris and his unequalled lady.' The knight and the countess looked on each other, and the lady, taking from her finger a ring of pure gold, prayed the old man to accept of it as a mark of her esteem and her husband's. 'With one other condition,' said the philosopher, 'which I trust you will not find altogether unsatisfactory. I have, on the way to the city by the most pleasant road, a small kiosk, or hermitage, where I sometimes receive my friends, who, I venture to say, are among the most respectable personages of this empire. Two or three of these will probably honour my residence to-day, and partake of the provision it affords. Could I add to these the company of the noble Count and Countess of Paris, I should deem my poor habitation honoured for ever.'

'How say you, my noble wife?' said the Count. 'The company of a minstrel befits the highest birth, honours the highest rank, and adds to the greatest achievements; and the invitation does us too much credit to be rejected.'

'It grows somewhat late,' said the Countess; 'but we came not here to shun a sinking sun or a darkening sky, and I feel it my duty, as well as my satisfaction, to place at the command of the good father every pleasure which it is in my power to

offer to him, for having been the means of your neglecting his advice.'

'The path is so short,' said Agelastes, 'that we had better keep our present mode of travelling, if the lady should not want the assistance of horses.'

'No horses on my account,' said the Lady Brenhilda. 'My waiting-woman, Agatha, has what necessaries I may require; and, for the rest, no knight ever travelled so little embarrassed with baggage as my husband.'

Agelastes, therefore, led the way through the deepening wood, which was freshened by the cooler breath of evening, and his guests accompanied him.

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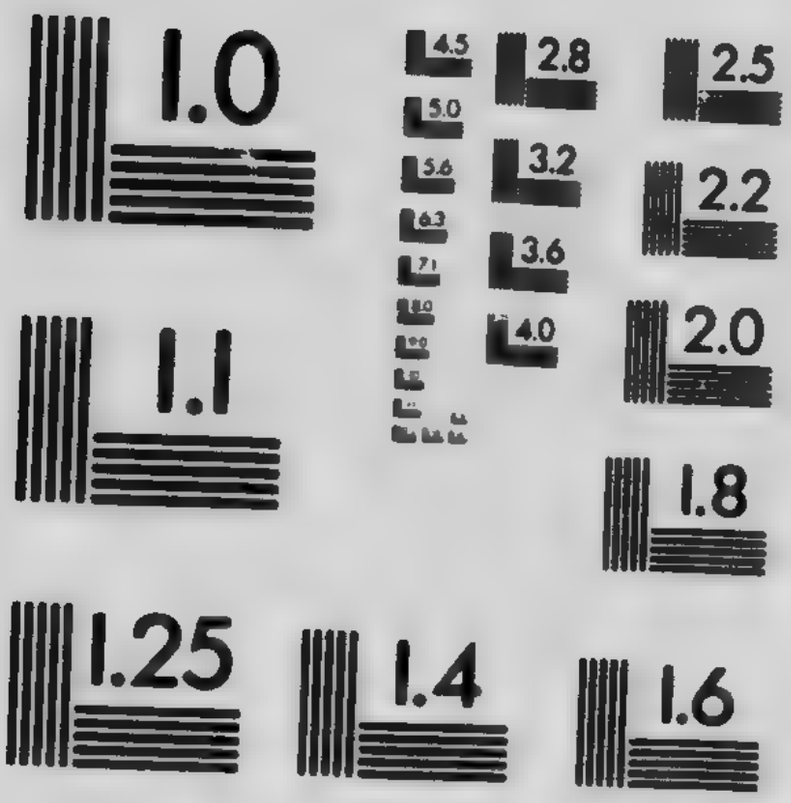

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CHAPTER XI

Without, a ruin, broken, tangled, cumbrous,
Within, it was a little paradise,
Where Taste had made her dwelling. Statuary,
First-born of human art, moulded her images,
And bade men mark and worship.

Anonymous.

THE Count of Paris and his lady attended the old man whose advanced age, his excellence in the use of the French language, which he spoke to admiration above all, his skill in applying it to poetical and romantic subjects, which was essential to what was then termed history and *belles-lettres* — drew from the noble hearers a degree of applause which, as Agelastes had seldom been vain enough to consider as his due, so, on the part of the Knight of Paris and his lady, had it been but rarely conferred.

They had walked for some time by a path which sometimes seemed to hide itself among the woods that came down to the shore of the Propontis, sometimes emerged from concealment, and skirted the open margin of the strait, while at every turn it seemed guided by the desire to select a choice and contrast of beauty. Variety of scenes and manners enlivened, from their novelty, the landscape to the pilgrims. By the sea-shore, nymphs were seen dancing and shepherds piping, or beating the tambourine to their steps, as represented in some groups of ancient statuary. The very faces had a singular resemblance to the antique. If old, their long robes, their attitudes, and magnificent heads, presented the ideas which distinguish prophets and saints; while, on the other hand, the features of the young recalled the expressive countenances of the heroes of antiquity, and the charms of those lovely females by whom their deeds were inspired.

But the race of the Greeks was no longer to be seen, even in its native country, unmixed, or in absolute purity; on the

contrary, they saw groups of persons with features which argued a different descent.

In a retiring bosom of the shore, which was traversed by the path, the rocks, receding from the beach, rounded off a spacious portion of level sand, and, in some degree, inclosed it. A party of heathen Scythians whom they beheld presented the deformed features of the demons they were said to worship — flat noses with expanded nostrils, which seemed to admit the sight to their very brain; faces which extended rather in breadth than length, with strange unintellectual eyes placed in the extremity; figures short and dwarfish, yet garnished with legs and arms of astonishing sinewy strength, disproportioned to their bodies. As the travellers passed, the savages held a species of tournament, as the Count termed it. In this they exercised themselves by darting at each other long reeds, or canes, balanced for the purpose, which, in this rude sport, they threw with such force as not unfrequently to strike each other from their steeds, and otherwise to cause serious damage. Some of the combatants being, for the time, out of the play, devoured with greedy looks the beauty of the Countess, and eyed her in such a manner that she said to Count Robert — 'I have never known fear, my husband, nor is it for me to acknowledge it now; but if disgust be an ingredient of it, these misformed brutes are qualified to inspire it.'

'What, ho, sir knight!' exclaimed one of the infidels, 'your wife, or your lady love, has committed a fault against the privileges of the imperial Scythians, and not small will be the penalty she has incurred. You may go your way as fast as you will out of this place, which is, for the present, our hippodrome or atmeidan, call it which you will, as you prize the Roman or the Saracen language; but for your wife, if the sacrament has united you, believe my word, that she parts not so soon nor so easy.'

'Scoundrel heathen,' said the Christian knight, 'dost thou hold that language to a peer of France?'

Agelastes here interposed, and, using the sounding language of a Grecian courtier, reminded the Scythians (mercenary soldiers, as they seemed, of the empire) that all violence against the European pilgrims was, by the imperial orders, strictly prohibited under pain of death.

'I know better,' said the exulting savage, shaking one or two javelins with broad steel heads and wings of the eagle's feather, which last were dabbled in blood. 'Ask the wings of

my javelin,' he said, 'in whose heart's blood these feathe have been dyed. They shall reply to you that, if Alexi Comnenus be the friend of the European pilgrims, it is on while he looks upon them; and we are too exemplary soldie to serve our emperor otherwise than he wishes to be served.'

'Peace, Toxartis,' said the philosopher, 'thou beliest thin emperor.'

'Peace thou!' said Toxartis, 'or I will do a deed that mis becomes a soldier, and rid the world of a prating old man.'

So saying, he put forth his hand to take hold of th Countess's veil. With the readiness which frequent use ha given to the warlike lady, she withdrew herself from th heathen's grasp, and with her trenchant sword dealt him s sufficient a blow, that Toxartis lay lifeless on the plain. Th Count leapt on the fallen leader's steed, and crying his war cry, 'Son of Charlemagne, to the rescue!' he rode amid the rout of heathen cavaliers with a battle-axe, which he found at the saddle-bow of the deceased chieftain, and wielding it with remorseless dexterity, he soon slew or wounded, or compelled to flight, the objects of his resentment; nor was there any o them who abode an instant to support the boast which they had made.

'The despicable churls!' said the Countess to Agelastes; 'it irks me that a drop of such coward blood should stain the hands of a noble knight. They call their exercise a tourna me , although in their whole exertions every blow is aimed behind the back, and not one has the courage to throw his windlestraw while he perceives that of another pointed against himself.'

'Such is their custom,' said Agelastes; 'not perhaps so much from cowardice as from habit, in exercising before his Imperial Majesty. I have seen that Toxartis literally turn his back upon the mark when he bent his bow in full career, and when in the act of galloping the farthest from his object, he pierced it through the very centre with a broad arrow.'

'A force of such soldiers,' said Count Robert, who had now rejoined his friends, 'could not, methinks, be very formidable where there was but an ounce of genuine courage in the assailants.'

'Meantime, let us pass on to my kiosk,' said Agelastes, 'lest the fugitives find friends to encourage them in thoughts of revenge.'

'Such friends,' said Count Robert, 'methinks, the insolent

heathens ought not to find in any land which calls itself Christian; and if I survive the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre, I shall make it my first business to inquire by what right your emperor retains in his service a band of paynim and unmannerly cut-throats, who dare offer injury upon the highway, which ought to be sacred to the peace of God and the king, and to noble ladies and inoffensive pilgrims. It is one of a list of many questions which, my vow accomplished, I will not fail to put to him — ay, and expecting an answer, as they say, prompt and categorical.'

'You shall gain no answer from me, though,' said Agelastes to himself. 'Your demands, sir knight, are over-peremptory, and imposed under too rigid conditions, to be replied to by those who can evade them.'

He changed the conversation, accordingly, with easy dexterity; and they had not proceeded much farther, before they reached a spot the natural beauties of which called forth the admiration of his foreign companions. A copious brook, gushing out of the woodland, descended to the sea with no small noise and tumult; and, as if disdaining a quieter course, which it might have gained by a little circuit to the right, it took the readiest road to the ocean, plunging over the face of a lofty and barren precipice which overhung the sea-shore, and from thence led its little tribute, with as much noise as if it had the stream of a full river to boast of, to the waters of the Hellespont.

The rock, we have said, was bare, unless in so far as it was clothed with the foaming waters of the cataract; but the banks on each side were covered with plane-trees, walnut-trees, cypresses, and other kinds of large timber proper to the East. The fall of water, always agreeable in a warm climate, and generally produced by artificial means, was here natural, and had been chosen, something like the Sibyl's temple at Tivoli, for the seat of a goddess to whom the invention of polytheism had assigned a sovereignty over the department around. The shrine was small and circular, like many of the lesser temples of the rustic deities, and inclosed by the wall of an outer court. After its desecration, it had probably been converted into a luxurious summer retreat by Agelastes, or some Epicurean philosopher. As the building, itself of a light, airy, and fantastic character, was dimly seen through the branches and foliage on the edge of the rock, so the mode by which it was accessible was not at first apparent amongst the mist of the cascade. A pathway, a good deal hidden by vegetation,

ascended by a gentle acclivity, and, prolonged by the ar
tect by means of a few broad and easy marble steps, mak
part of the original approach, conducted the passenger t
small, but exquisitely lovely, velvet lawn in front of the tu
or temple we have described, the back part of which build
overhung the cataract.

CHAPTER XII

The parties met. The wily, wordy Greek,
Weighing each word, and canvassing each syllable,
Evading, arguing, equivocating;
And the stern Frank came with his two-hand sword
Watching to see which way the balance sways,
That he may throw it in, and turn the scales.

Palestine.

AT a signal made by Agelastes, the door of this romantic retreat was opened by Diogenes, the negro slave, to whom our readers have been already introduced; nor did it escape the wily old man that the Count and his lady testified some wonder at his form and lineaments, being the first African perhaps whom they had ever seen so closely. The philosopher lost not the opportunity of making an impression on their minds, by a display of the superiority of his knowledge.

'This poor being,' he observed, 'is of the race of Ham, the undutiful son of Noah; for his transgressions against his parent, he was banished to the sands of Africa, and was condemned to be the father of a race doomed to be the slaves of the issue of his more dutiful brethren.'

The knight and his lady gazed on the wonderful appearance before them, and did not, it may be believed, think of doubting the information, which was so much of a piece with their prejudices, while their opinion of their host was greatly augmented by the supposed extent of his knowledge.

'It gives pleasure to a man of humanity,' continued Agelastes, 'when, in old age or sickness, we must employ the services of others, which is at other times scarce lawful, to choose his assistants out of a race of beings, hewers of wood and drawers of water, from their birth upwards destined to slavery; and to whom, therefore, by employing them as slaves, we render no injury, but carry into effect, in a slight degree, the intentions of the Great Being who made us all.'

'Are there many of a race,' said the Countess, 'so singularly

unhappy in their destination? I have hitherto thought stories of black men as idle as those which minstrels tel fairies and ghosts.'

'Do not believe so,' said the philosopher; 'the race numerous as the sands of the sea, neither are they altoget unhappy in discharging the duties which their fate has allot them. Those who are of worse character suffer even in life the penance due to their guilt: they become the slaves the cruel and tyrannical, are beaten, starved, and mutila To those whose moral characters are better, better masters provided, who share with their slaves, as with their childr food and raiment, and the other good things which they the selves enjoy. To some, Heaven allots the favour of kings of conquerors, and to a few, but those the chief favourites the species, hath been assigned a place in the mansions philosophy, where, by availing themselves of the lights wh their masters can afford, they gain a prospect into that wo which is the residence of true happiness.'

'Methinks I understand you,' replied the Countess, 'and so, I ought rather to envy our sable friend here than to p him, for having been allotted in the partition of his kind the possession of his present master, from whom, doubtless, has acquired the desirable knowledge which you mention.'

'He learns, at least,' said Agelastes, modestly, 'what I c teach, and, above all, to be contented with his situati Diogenes, my good child,' said he, changing his address to t slave, 'thou seest I have company — what does the po hermit's larder afford, with which he may regale his honour guests?'

Hitherto they had advanced no farther than a sort of ou room, or hall of entrance, fitted up with no more expense th might have suited one who desired at some [illegible] and mo taste, to avail himself of the ancient building [illegible] ester and private retirement. The chairs and cor[illegible] cover with Eastern wove mats, and were of the [illegible] d mo primitive form. But on touching a spring, [illegible] ior apar ment was displayed, which had considerable pretension splendour and magnificence.

The furniture and hangings of this apartment were of straw coloured silk, wrought on the looms of Persia, and crossed wi embroidery, which produced a rich yet simple effect. Th ceiling was carved in arabesque, and the four corners of th apartment were formed into recesses for statuary, which ha

been produced in a better age of the art than that which existed at the period of our story. In one nook a shepherd seemed to withdraw himself, as if ashamed to produce his scantily-covered person, while he was willing to afford the audience the music of the reed which he held in his hand. Three damsels, resembling the Graces in the beautiful proportions of their limbs, and the slender clothing which they wore, lurked in different attitudes, each in her own niche, and seemed but to await the first sound of the music to bound forth from thence and join in the frolic dance. The subject was beautiful, yet somewhat light, to ornament the study of such a sage as Agelastes represented himself to be.

He seemed to be sensible that this might attract observation. 'These figures,' he said, 'executed at the period of the highest excellence of Grecian art, were considered of old as the choral nymphs assembled to adore the goddess of the place, waiting but the music to join in the worship of the temple. And, in truth, the wisest may be interested in seeing how near to animation the genius of these wonderful men could bring the inflexible marble. Allow but for the absence of the divine afflatus, or breath of animation, and an unenlightened heathen might suppose the miracle of Prometheus was about to be realised. But we,' said he, looking upwards, 'are taught to form a better judgment between what man can do and the productions of the Deity.'

Some subjects of natural history were painted on the walls, and the philosopher fixed the attention of his guests upon the half-reasoning elephant, of which he mentioned several anecdotes, which they listened to with great eagerness.

A distant strain was here heard, as if of music in the woods, penetrating by fits through the hoarse roar of the cascade, which, as it sunk immediately below the windows, filled the apartment with its deep voice.

'Apparently,' said Agelastes, 'the friends whom I expected are approaching, and bring with them the means of enchanting another sense. It is well they do so, since wisdom tells us that we best honour the Deity by enjoying the gifts he has provided us.'

These words called the attention of the philosopher's Frankish guests to the preparations exhibited in this tasteful saloon. These were made for an entertainment in the manner of the ancient Romans, and couches, which were laid beside a table ready decked, announced that the male guests, at least,

were to assist at the banquet in the usual recumbent postu of the ancients, while seats, placed among the couches, seeme to say that females were expected, who would observe th Grecian customs, in eating seated. The preparations for goo cheer were such as, though limited in extent, could scarce h excelled in quality, either by the splendid dishes which deck Trimalchio's banquet of former days, or the lighter delicacies Grecian cookery, or the succulent and highly-spiced mess indulged in by the nations of the East, to whichever they hap pened to give the preference; and it was with an air of some vanity that Agelastes asked his guests to share a poor pilgrim' meal.

'We care little for dainties,' said the Count; 'nor does our present course of life as pilgrims, bound by a vow, allow u much choice on such subjects. Whatever is food for soldiers suffices the Countess and myself; for, with our will, we would at every hour be ready for battle, and the less time we use in preparing for the field, it is even so much the better. Sit then, Brenhilda, since the good man will have it so, and let us lose no time in refreshment, lest we waste that which should be otherwise employed.'

'A moment's forgiveness,' said Agelastes, 'until the arrival of my other friends, whose music you may now hear is close at hand, and who will not long, I may safely promise, divide you from your meal.'

'For that,' said the Count, 'there is no haste; and since you seem to account it a part of civil manners, Brenhilda and I can with ease postpone our repast; unless you will permit us, what I own would be more pleasing, to take a morsel of bread and a cup of water presently, and, thus refreshed, to leave the space clear for your more curious and more familiar guests?'

'The saints above forbid!' sa.. Agelastes. 'Guests so hon oured never before pressed these cushions, nor could do so, if the sacred family of the imperial Alexius himself even now stood at the gate.'

He had hardly uttered these words, when the full-blown peal of a trumpet, louder in a tenfold degree than the strains of music they had before heard, was now sounded in the front of the temple, piercing through the murmur of the waterfall, as a Damascus blade penetrates the armour, and assailing the ears of the hearers, as the sword pierces the flesh of him who wears the harness.

'You seem surprised or alarmed, father,' said Count Robert. 'Is there danger near, and do you distrust our protection?'

'No,' said Agelastes, 'that would give me confidence in any extremity; but these sounds excite awe, not fear. They tell me that some of the imperial family are about to be my guests. Yet fear nothing, my noble friends; they, whose look is life, are ready to shower their favours with profusion upon strangers so worthy of honour as they will see here. Meantime, my bro- must touch my threshold in order duly to welcome them.' So saying, he hurried to the outer door of the building.

'Each land has its customs,' said the Count, as he followed hi host, with his wife hanging on his arm; 'but, Brenhilda, as they are so various, it is little wonder that they appear unseemly to each other. Here, however, in deference to my entertainer, I stoop my crest, in the manner which seems to be required.' So saying, he followed Agelastes into the ante-room, where a new scene awaited them.

CHAPTER XIII

AGELASTES gained his threshold before Count Robert Paris and his lady. He had, therefore, time to m his prostrations before a huge animal, then unkno to the Western world, but now universally distinguished elephant. On its back was a pavilion, or palanquin, wit which were inclosed the august persons of the Empress Ir and her daughter Anna Comnena. Nicephorus Brennius tended the princesses in the command of a gallant body of li horse, whose splendid armour would have given more plea to the crusader if it had possessed less an air of useless wea and effeminate magnificence. But the effect which it produc in its appearance was as brilliant as could well be conceiv The officers alone of this *corps de garde* followed Nicephorus the platform, prostrated themselves while the ladies of the i perial house descended, and rose up again under a cloud waving plumes and flashing lances when they stood secure up the platform in front of the building. Here the somewhat ag but commanding, form of the Empress, and the still juven beauties of the fair historian, were seen to great advanta In the front of a deep background of spears and waving cre stood the sounder of the sacred trumpet, conspicuous by l size and the richness of his apparel; he kept his post on a r above the stone staircase, and, by an occasional note of his strument, intimated to the squadrons beneath that they sho stay their progress, and attend the motions of the Empress o the wife of the Cæsar.

The fair form of the Countess Brenhilda, and the fanta appearance of her half-masculine garb, attracted the atten of the ladies of Alexius's family, but was too extraordinary command their admiration. Agelastes became sensible th was a necessity that he should introduce his guests to ea other, if he desired they should meet on satisfactory ter 'May I speak,' he said, 'and live? The armed strangers wh

you and now with me are worthy companions of those myriads whom zeal for the suffering inhabitants of Palestine has brought from the western extremity of Europe, at once to enjoy the countenance of Alexius Comnenus and to aid him, since it pleases him to accept their assistance, in expelling the paynims from the bounds of the sacred empire, and garrison those regions in their stead as vassals of his Imperial Majesty.'

'We are pleased,' said the Empress, 'worthy Agelastes, that you should be kind to those who are disposed to be so reverent to the Emperor. And we are rather disposed to talk with them ourselves, that our daughter, whom Apollo hath gifted with the choice talent of recording what she sees, may become acquainted with one of those female warriors of the West of whom we have heard so much by common fame, and yet know so little with certainty.'

'Madam,' said the Count, 'I can but rudely express to you what I have to find fault with in the explanation which this old man hath given of our purpose in coming hither. Certain it is, we neither owe Alexius fealty nor had we the purpose of paying him any, when we took the vow upon ourselves which brought us against Asia. We came, because we understood that the Holy Land had been torn from the Greek Emperor by the Pagans, Saracens, Turks, and other infidels from whom we are come to win it back. The wisest and most prudent among us have judged it necessary to acknowledge the Emperor's authority, since there was no such safe way of passing to the discharge of our vow as that of acknowledging fealty to him, as the best mode of preventing quarrels among Christian states. We, though independent of any earthly king, do not pretend to be greater men than they, and therefore have condescended to pay the same homage.'

The Empress coloured several times with indignation in the course of this speech, which, in more passages than one, was at variance with those imperial maxims of the Grecian court which held its dignity so high, and plainly intimated a tone of opinion which was deprecating to the Emperor's power. But the Empress Irene had received instructions from her imperial spouse to be aware how she gave, or even took, any ground of quarrel with the crusaders, who, though coming in the appearance of subjects, were, nevertheless, too punctilious and ready to take fire to render them safe discussers of delicate differences. She made a graceful reverence accordingly, as if she had scarce understood what the Count of Paris had explained so bluntly.

At this moment the appearance of the principal persons either hand attracted, in a wonderful degree, the attention the other party, and there seemed to exist among them general desire of further acquaintance, and, at the same tim a manifest difficulty in expressing such a wish.

Agelastes — to begin with the master of the house — had ris from the ground indeed, but without venturing to assume upright posture: he remained before the imperial ladies wi his body and head still bent, his hand interposed between h eyes and their faces, like a man that would shade his eyesig from the level sun, and awaited in silence the commands those to whom he seemed to think it disrespectful to propos the slightest action, save by testifying in general that his hous and his slaves were at their unlimited command. The Countes of Paris, on the other hand, and her warlike husband, were th peculiar objects of curiosity to Irene and her accomplishe daughter, Anna Comnena; and it occurred to both these im perial ladies that they had never seen finer specimens of huma strength and beauty; but, by a natural instinct, they preferre the manly bearing of the husband to that of the wife, whic seemed to her own sex rather too haughty and too masculin to be altogether pleasing.

Count Robert and his lady had also their own object attention in the newly arrived group, and, to speak truth, i was nothing else than the peculiarities of the monstrous anima which they now saw, for the first time, employed as a beast burden in the service of the fair Irene and her daughter. Th dignity and splendour of the elder princess, the grace and vivacity of the younger, were alike lost in Brenhilda's earnes inquiries into the history of the elephant, and the use which it made of its trunk, tusks, and huge ears, upon different occasions.

Another person who took a less direct opportunity to gaze on Brenhilda with a deep degree of interest was the Cæsar, Nicephorus. This prince kept his eye as steadily upon the Frankish countess as he could well do without attracting the attention, and exciting perhaps the suspicions, of his wife and mother-in-law; he therefore endeavoured to restore speech t an interview which would have been awkward without it. 'It is possible,' he said, 'beautiful countess, that, this being your first visit to the Queen of the World, you have never hitherto seen the singularly curious animal called the elephant.'

'Pardon me,' said the Countess, 'I have been treated by this

learned gentleman to a sight and some account of that wonderful creature.'

By all who heard this observation, the Lady Brenhilda was supposed to have made a satirical thrust at the philosopher himself, who, in the imperial court, usually went by the name of the Elephant.

'No one could describe the beast more accurately than Agelastes,' said the Princess, with a smile of intelligence, which went round her attendants.

'He knows its docility, its sensibility, and its fidelity,' said the philosopher in a subdued tone.

'True, good Agelastes,' said the Princess; 'we should not criticise the animal which kneels to take us up. Come, lady of a foreign land,' she continued, turning to the Frank count, and especially his countess, 'and you her gallant lord! When you return to your native country, you shall say you have seen the imperial family partake of their food, and in so far acknowledge themselves to be of the same clay with other mortals, sharing their poorest wants, and relieving them in the same manner.'

'That, gentle lady, I can well believe,' said Count Robert; 'my curiosity would be more indulged by seeing this strange animal at his food.'

'You will see the elephant more conveniently at his mess within doors,' answered the Princess, looking at Agelastes.

'Lady,' said Brenhilda, 'I would not willingly refuse an invitation given in courtesy, but the sun has waxed low unnoticed, and we must return to the city.'

'Be not afraid,' said the fair historian: 'you shall have the advantage of our imperial escort to protect you in your return.'

'Fear — afraid — escort — protect! These are words I know not. Know, lady, that my husband, the noble Count of Paris, is my sufficient escort; and even were he not with me, Brenhilda de Aspramonte fears nothing, and can defend herself.'

'Fair daughter,' said Agelastes, 'if I may be permitted to speak, you mistake the gracious intentions of the Princess, who expresses herself as to a lady of her own land. What she desires is to learn from you some of the most marked habits and manners of the Franks, of which you are so beautiful an example; and in return for such information the illustrious princess would be glad to procure your entrance to those spacious collections where animals from all corners of the habitable world have been assembled at the command of our Emperor

Alexius, as if to satisfy the wisdom of those sages to whom creation is known, from the deer so small in size that it exceeded by an ordinary rat to that huge and singular inh itant of Africa that can browse on the tops of trees that forty feet high, while the length of its hind legs does not exc the half of that wondrous height.'

'It is enough,' said the Countess, with some eagerne but Agelastes had got a point of discussion after his o mind.

'There is also,' he said, 'that huge lizard, which, resembli in shape the harmless inhabitant of the moors of other co tries, is in Egypt a monster thirty feet in length, clothed impenetrable scales, and moaning over his prey when he catc it, with the hope and purpose of drawing others within danger, by mimicking the lamentations of humanity.'

'Say no more, father!' exclaimed the lady. 'My Robe we will go, will we not, where such objects are to be seen?'

'There is also,' said Agelastes, who saw that he would ga his point by addressing himself to the curiosity of the strange 'the huge animal, wearing on its back an invulnerable ve ment, having on its nose a horn, and sometimes two, the fol of whose hide are of the most immense thickness, and whi never knight was able to wound.'

'We will go, Robert, will we not?' reiterated the Countess

'Ay,' replied the Count, 'and teach these Easterns how judge of a knight's sword by a single blow of my trus Tranchefer.'

'And who knows,' said Brenhilda, 'since this is a land enchantment, but what some person, who is languishing in foreign shape, may have their enchantment unexpectedly di solved by a stroke of the good weapon?'

'Say no more, father!' exclaimed the Count. 'We w attend this princess, since such she is, were her whole esco bent to oppose our passage, instead of being by her comma to be our guard. For know, all who hear me, thus much the nature of the Franks, that, when you tell us of danger a difficulties, you give us the same desire to travel the ro where they lie as other men have in seeking either pleasu or profit in the paths in which such are to be found.'

As the Count pronounced these words, he struck his ha upon his Tranchefer, as an illustration of the manner in whi he purposed upon occasion to make good his way. The court circle startled somewhat at the clash of steel and the fie

look of the chivalrous Count Robert. The Empress indulged her alarm by retreating into the inner apartment of the pavilion.

With a grace which was rarely deigned to any but those in close alliance with the imperial family, Anna Comnena took the arm of the noble count. 'I see,' she said, 'that the imperial mother has honoured the house of the learned Agelastes by leading the way; therefore, to teach you Grecian breeding must fall to my share.' Saying this, she conducted him to the inner apartment.

'Fear not for your wife,' she said, as she noticed the Frank look round: 'our husband, like ourselves, has pleasure in showing attention to the stranger, and will lead the Countess to our board. It is not the custom of the imperial family to eat in company with strangers; but we thank Heaven for having instructed us in that civility which can know no degradation in dispensing with ordinary rules to do honour to strangers of such merit as yours. I know it will be my mother's request that you will take your places without ceremony; and also, although the grace be somewhat particular, I am sure that it will have my imperial father's approbation.'

'Be it as your ladyship lists,' said Count Robert. 'There are few men to whom I would yield place at the board, if they had not gone before me in the battle-field. To a lady, especially so fair a one, I willingly yield my place and bend my knee, whenever I have the good hap to meet her.'

The Princess Anna, instead of feeling herself awkward in the discharge of the extraordinary, and, as she might have thought it, degrading, office of ushering a barbarian chief to the banquet, felt, on the contrary, flattered at having bent to her purpose a heart so obstinate as that of Count Robert, and elated, perhaps, with a certain degree of satisfied pride while under his momentary protection.

The Empress Irene had already seated herself at the head of the table. She looked with some astonishment when her daughter and son-in-law, taking their seats at her right and left hand, invited the Count and Countess of Paris, the former to recline, the latter to sit at the board, in the places next to themselves; but she had received the strictest orders from her husband to be deferential in every respect to the strangers, and did not think it right, therefore, to interpose any ceremonious scruples.

The Countess took her seat, as indicated, beside the Cæsar and the Count, instead of reclining in the mode of the Grecian

men, also seated himself in the European fashion b
Princess.

'I will not lie prostrate,' said he, laughing, 'except i
sideration of a blow weighty enough to compel me to
nor then either, if I am able to start up and return it.'

The service of the table then began, and, to say tru
appeared to be an important part of the business of th
The officers who attended to perform their several duti
deckers of the table, sewers of the banquet, removers
tasters to the imperial family, thronged into the banque
room, and seemed to vie with each other in calling
Agelastes for spices, condiments, sauces, and wines of va
kinds, the variety and multiplicity of their demands bein
parently devised, *ex proposito*, for stirring the patience o
philosopher. But Agelastes, who had anticipated most of
requests, however unusual, supplied them completely,
the greatest part, by the ready agency of his active
Diogenes, to whom, at the same time, he contrived to tra
all blame for the absence of such articles as he was unab
provide.

'Be Homer my witness, the accomplished Virgil, and
curious felicity of Horace, that, trifling and unworthy as
banquet was, my note of directions to this thrice-unha
slave gave the instructions to procure every ingredient ne
sary to convey to each dish its proper gusto. Ill-omi
carrion that thou art, wherefore placedst thou the pic
cucumber so far apart from the boar's head, and why
these superb congers unprovided with a requisite quantit
fennel? The divorce betwixt the shell-fish and the C
wine, in a presence like this, is worthy of the divorce of t
own soul from thy body; or, to say the least, of a life-
residence in the *pistrinum*.' While thus the philosopher
ceeded with threats, curses, and menaces against his slave,
stranger might have an opportunity of comparing the li
torrent of his domestic eloquence, which the manners of
times did not consider as ill-bred, with the louder and de
share of adulation towards his guests. They mingled like
oil with the vinegar and pickles which Diogenes mixed
the sauce. Thus the Count and Countess had an opportu
to estimate the happiness and the felicity reserved for th
slaves whom the omnipotent Jupiter, in the plenitude of c
passion for their state, and in guerdon of their good mor
had dedicated to the service of a philosopher. The share t

themselves took in the banquet was finished with a degree of speed which gave surprise not only to their host, but also to the imperial guests.

The Count helped himself carelessly out of a dish which stood near him, and partaking of a draught of wine, without inquiring whether it was of the vintage which the Greeks held it matter of conscience to mingle with that species of food, he declared himself satisfied; nor could the obliging entreaties of his neighbour, Anna Comnena, induce him to partake of other messes represented as being either delicacies or curiosities. His spouse eat still more moderately of the food which seemed most simply cooked, and stood nearest her at the board, and partook of a cup of crystal water, which she slightly tinged with wine, at the persevering entreaty of the Cæsar. They then relinquished the farther business of the banquet, and, leaning back upon their seats, occupied themselves in watching the liberal credit done to the feast by the rest of the guests present.

A modern synod of gourmands would hardly have equalled the imperial family of Greece seated at a philosophical banquet, whether in the critical knowledge displayed of the science of eating in all its branches or in the practical cost and patience with which they exercised it: the ladies, indeed, did not eat much of any one dish, but they tasted of almost all that were presented to them, and their name was legion. Yet, after a short time, in Homeric phrase, the rage of thirst and hunger was assuaged, or, more probably, the Princess Anna Comnena was tired of being an object of some inattention to the guest who sat next her, and who, joining his high military character to his very handsome presence, was a person by whom few ladies would willingly be neglected. There is no new guise, says our father Chaucer, but what resembles an old one; and the address of Anna Comnena to the Frankish count might resemble that of a modern lady of fashion in her attempts to engage in conversation the exquisite who sits by her side in an apparently absent fit. 'We have piped unto you,' said the Princess, 'and you have not danced. We have sung to you the jovial chorus of *Evoe, evoe*, and you will neither worship Comus nor Bacchus. Are we then to judge you a follower of the Muses, in whose service, as well as in that of Phœbus, we ourselves pretend to be enlisted?'

'Fair lady,' replied the Frank, 'be not offended [illegible] y stating once for all, in plain terms, that I am a Christian [illegible], spitting

at and bidding defiance to Apollo, Bacchus, Comus, and other heathen deities whatsoever.'

'O! cruel interpretation of my unwary words!' said Princess. 'I did but mention the gods of music, poetry, a eloquence, worshipped by our divine philosophers, and wh names are still used to distinguish the arts and sciences o which they presided, and the Count interprets it serio into a breach of the Second Commandment! Our Lady p serve me, we must take care how we speak, when our wo are so sharply interpreted.'

The Count laughed as the Princess spoke. 'I had offensive meaning, madam,' he said, 'nor would I wish interpret your words otherwise than as being most innoce and praiseworthy. I shall suppose that your speech contain all that was fair and blameless. You are, I have understo one of those who, like our worthy host, express in compositi the history and feats of the warlike time in which you liv and give to the posterity which shall succeed us the knowled of the brave deeds which have been achieved in our day. respect the task to which you have dedicated yourself, a know not how a lady could lay after ages under an obligati to her in the same degree, unless, like my wife, Brenhilda, S were herself to be the actress of deeds which she record And, by the way, she now looks towards her neighbour at t table as if she were about to rise and leave him; her inclina tions are towards Constantinople, and, with your ladyship permission, I cannot allow her to go thither alone.'

'That you shall neither of you do,' said Anna Comnena 'since we all go to the capital directly, and for the purpose seeing those wonders of nature of which numerous example have been collected by the splendour of my imperial fathe If my husband seems to have given offence to the Countess, d not suppose that it was intentionally dealt to her; on the co trary, you will find the good man, when you are better a quainted with him, to be one of those simple persons w manage so unhappily what they mean for civilities, that tho to whom they are addressed receive them frequently in anoth sense.'

The Countess of Paris, however, refused again to sit dow to the table from which she had risen, so that Agelastes an his imperial guests saw themselves under the necessity eithe to permit the strangers to depart, which they seemed unwilling to do; or to detain them by force, to attempt which might no

perhaps have been either safe or pleasant; or, lastly, to have waived the etiquette of rank, and set out along with them, at the same time managing their dignity so as to take the initiatory step, though the departure took place upon the motion of their wilful guests. Much tumult there was — bustling, disputing, and shouting — among the troops and officers who were thus moved from their repast two hours at least sooner than had been experienced upon similar occasions in the memory of the oldest among them. A different arrangement of the imperial party likewise seemed to take place by mutual consent.

Nicephorus Briennius ascended the seat upon the elephant, and remained there placed beside his august mother-in-law. Agelastes, on a sober-minded palfrey, which permitted him to prolong his philosophical harangues at his own pleasure, rode beside the Countess Brenhilda, whom he made the principal object of his oratory. The fair historian, though she usually travelled in a litter, preferred upon this occasion a spirited horse, which enabled her to keep pace with Count Robert of Paris, on whose imagination, if not his feelings, she seemed to have it in view to work a marked impression. The conversation of the Empress with her son-in-law requires no special detail. It was a tissue of criticisms upon the manners and behaviour of the Franks, and a hearty wish that they might be soon transported from the realms of Greece, never more to return. Such was at least the tone of the Empress, nor did the Cæsar find it convenient to express any more favourable opinion of the strangers. On the other hand, Agelastes made a long circuit ere he ventured to approach the subject which he wished to introduce. He spoke of the menagerie of the Emperor as a most superb collection of natural history; he extolled different persons at court for having encouraged Alexius Comnenus in this wise and philosophical amusement; but, finally, the praise of all others was bestowed that the philosopher might dwell upon that of Nicephorus Briennius, to whom the cabinet or collection of Constantinople was indebted, he said, for the principal treasures it contained.

'I am glad it is so,' said the haughty countess, without lowering her voice or affecting any change of manner — 'I am glad that he understands some things better worth understanding than whispering with stranger young women. Credit me, if he gives much license to his tongue among such women of my country as these stirring times may bring hither, some one or

other of them will fling him into the cataract which dash below.'

'Pardon me, fair lady,' said Agelastes; 'no female hea could meditate an action so atrocious against so fine a form that of the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius.'

'Put it not on that issue, father,' said the offended countess 'for, by my patroness saint, Our Lady of the Broken Lance had it not been for regard to these two ladies, who seemed t intend some respect to my husband and myself, that sam Nicephorus should have been as perfectly a Lord of the Broke Bones as any Cæsar who has borne the title since the grea Julius.'

The philosopher, upon this explicit information, began t entertain some personal fear for himself, and hastened, b diverting the conversation, which he did with great dexterity to the story of Hero and Leander, to put the affront receive out of the head of this unscrupulous amazon.

Meantime, Count Robert of Paris w engrossed, as it may be termed, by the fair Anna Comnena. She spoke on all sub jects, on some better, doubtless, others worse, but on none did she suspect herself of any deficiency; while the good count wished heartily within himself that his companion had been safely in bed with the enchanted Princess of Zulichium. She performed, right or wrong, the part of a panegyrist of the Normans, until at length the Count, tired of hearing her prate of she knew not exactly what, broke in as follows:—

'Lady,' he said, 'notwithstanding I and my followers are sometimes so named, yet we are not Normans, who come hither as a numerous and separate body of pilgrims, under the com mand of their Duke Robert, a valiant, though extravagant, thoughtless, and weak man. I say nothing against the fame of these Normans. They conquered, in our fathers' day, a kingdom far stronger than their own, which men call England: I see that you entertain some of the natives of which country in your pay, under the name of Varangians. Although de feated, as I said, by the Normans, they are, nevertheless, a brave race; nor would we think ourselves much dishonoured by mixing in battle with them. Still, we are the valiant Franks, who had their dwelling on the eastern banks of the Rhine and of the Saale, who were converted to the Christian faith by the celebrated Clovis, and are sufficient, by our num bers and courage, to reconquer the Holy Land, should all Europe besides stand neutral in the contest.'

There are few things more painful to the vanity of a person like the Princess than the being detected in an egregious error at the moment she is taking credit to herself for being peculiarly accurately informed.

'A false slave, who knew not what he was saying, I suppose,' said the Princess, 'imposed upon me the belief that the Varangians were the natural enemies of the Normans. I see him marching there by the side of Achilles Tatius, the leader of his corps. Call him hither, you officers,—yonder tall man, I mean, with the battle-axe upon his shoulder.'

Hereward, distinguished by his post at the head of the squadron, was summoned from thence to the presence of the Princess, where he made his military obeisance with a cast of sternness in his aspect, as his glance lighted upon the proud look of the Frenchman who rode beside Anna Comnena.

'Did I not understand thee, fellow,' said Anna Comnena, 'to have informed me, nearly a month ago, that the Normans and the Franks were the same people, and enemies to the race from which you spring?'

'The Normans are our mortal enemies, lady,' answered Hereward, 'by whom we were driven from our native land. The Franks are subjects of the same lord-paramount with the Normans, and therefore they neither love the Varangians nor are beloved by them.'

'Good fellow,' said the French count, 'you do the Franks wrong, and ascribe to the Varangians, although not unnaturally, an undue degree of importance, when you suppose that a race which has ceased to exist as an independent nation for more than a generation can be either an object of interest or resentment to such as we are.'

'I am no stranger,' said the Varangian, 'to the pride of your heart, or the precedence which you assume over those who have been less fortunate in war than yourselves. It is God who casteth down and who buildeth up, nor is there in the world a prospect to which the Varangians would look forward with more pleasure than that a hundred of their number should meet in a fair field, either with the oppressive Normans or their modern compatriots, the vain Frenchmen, and let God be the judge which is most worthy of victory.'

'You take an insolent advantage of the chance,' said the Count of Paris, 'which gives you an unlooked-for opportunity to brave a nobleman.'

'It is my sorrow and shame,' said the Varangian, 'that that

opportunity is not complete; and that there is a chain aro
me which forbids me to say, "Slay me, or I'll kill thee be
we part from this spot!"'

'Why, thou foolish and hot-brained churl,' replied
Count, 'what right hast thou to the honour of dying by
blade? Thou art mad, or hast drained the ale-cup so dee
that thou knowest not what thou thinkest or sayest.'

'Thou liest,' said the Varangian, 'though such a repro
be the utmost scandal of thy race.'

The Frenchman motioned his hand quicker than light to
sword, but instantly withdrew it, and said with dignity, 'T
canst not offend me.'

'But thou,' said the exile, 'hast offended me in a mat
which can only be atoned by thy manhood.'

'Where and how?' answered the Count; 'although it
needless to ask the question, which thou canst not ans
rationally.'

'Thou hast this day,' answered the Varangian, 'put a mor
affront upon a great prince, whom thy master calls his al
and by whom thou hast been received with every rite
hospitality. Him thou hast affronted as one peasant at
merry-making would do shame to another, and this dishon
thou hast done to him in the very face of his own chiefs a
princes, and the nobles from every court of Europe.'

'It was thy master's part to resent my conduct,' said t
Frenchman, 'if in reality he so much felt it as an affront.'

'But that,' said Hereward, 'did not consist with the ma
ners of his country to do. Besides that, we trusty Varangia
esteem ourselves bound by our oath as much to defend o
Emperor, while the service lasts, on every inch of his hono
as on every foot of his territory; I therefore tell thee,
knight, sir count, or whatever thou callest thyself, there
mortal quarrel between thee and the Varangian Guard, ev
and until thou hast fought it out in fair and manly batt
body to body, with one of the said Imperial Varangians, wh
duty and opportunity shall permit — and so God schaw t
right!'

As this passed in the French language, the meaning escap
the understanding of such imperialists as were within hearin
at the time; and the Princess, who waited with some astonis
ment till the crusader and the Varangian had finished the
conference, when it was over, said to him with interest, 'I tru
you feel that poor man's situation to be too much at a distan

from your own to admit of your meeting him in what is termed knightly battle?'

'On such a question,' said the knight, 'I have but one answer to any lady who does not, like my Brenhilda, cover herself with a shield, and bear a sword by her side and the heart of a knight in her bosom.'

'And suppose for once,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'that I possessed such titles to your confidence, what would your answer be to me?'

'There can be little reason for concealing it,' said the Count. 'The Varangian is a brave man and a strong one; it is contrary to my vow to shun his challenge, and perhaps I shall derogate from my rank by accepting it; but the world is wide, and he is yet to be born who has seen Robert of Paris shun the face of mortal man. By means of some gallant officer among the Emperor's guards this poor fellow, who nourishes so strange an ambition, shall learn that he shall have his wish gratified.'

'And then ——?' said Anna Comnena.

'Why, then,' said the Count, 'in the poor man's own language, God schaw the right!'

'Which is to say,' said the Princess, 'that, if my father has an officer of his guards honourable enough to forward so pious and reasonable a purpose, the Emperor must lose an ally, in whose faith he puts confidence, or a most trusty and faithful soldier of his personal guard, who has distinguished himself upon many occasions?'

'I am happy to hear,' said the Count, 'that the man bears such a character. In truth, his ambition ought to have some foundation. The more I think of it, the rather am I of opinion that there is something generous, rather than derogatory, in giving to the poor exile, whose thoughts are so high and noble, those privileges of a man of rank which some who were born in such lofty station are too cowardly to avail themselves of. Yet despond not, noble princess: the challenge is not yet accepted of, and if it was, the issue is in the hand of God. As for me, whose trade is war, the sense that I have something so serious to transact with this resolute man will keep me from other less honourable quarrels, in which a lack of occupation might be apt to involve me.'

The Princess made no farther observation, being resolved, by private remonstrance to Achilles Tatius, to engage him to prevent a meeting which might be fatal to the one or the other of two brave men. The town now darkened before them, spar-

kling, at the same time, through its obscurity, by the m
lights which illuminated the houses of the citizens. The r
cavalcade held their way to the Golden Gate, where the tr
centurion put his guard under arms to receive them.

'We must now break off, fair ladi ,' said the Count, as
party, having now dismounted, were standing together at
private gate of the Blacquernal Palace, 'and find as we
the lodgings which we occupied last night.'

'Under your favour, no,' said the Empress. 'You must
content to take your supper and repose in quarters more fit
your rank , and,' added Irene, 'with no worse quarterma
than one of the imperial family who has been your travell
companion.'

This the Count heard with considerable inclination to
cept the hospitality which was so readily offered. Altho
as devoted as a man could well be to the charms of his .
hilda, the very idea never having entered his head of prefer
another's beauty to hers, yet, nevertheless, he had naturally
himself flattered by the attentions of a woman of emin
beauty and very high rank ; and the praises with which
Princess had loaded him had not entirely fallen to the grou
He was no longer in the humour in which the morning
found him, disposed to outrage the feelings of the Empe
and to insult his dignity , but, flattered by the adroit sy
phancy which the old philosopher ha learned from the scho
and the beautiful princess had been gifted with by nature,
assented to the Empress's proposal ; the more readily, perha
that the darkness did not permit him to see that there was
tinctly a shade displeasure on the brow of Brenhilda. Wh
ever the cause, she cared not to express it, and the married p
had just entered that labyrinth of passages through wh
Hereward had formerly wandered, when a chamberlain an
female attendant, richly dressed, bent the knee before th
and offered them the means and place to adjust their atti
ere they entered the imperial presence. Brenhilda looked up
her apparel and arms, spotted with the blood of the insol
Scythian, and, amazon as she was, felt the shame of bei
carelessly and improperly dressed. The arms of the knig
were also bloody, and in disarrangement.

'Tell my female squire, Agatha, to give her attendan
said the Countess. 'She alone is in the habit of assisting
unarm and to attire me.'

'Now, God be praised,' thought the Grecian lady of the b

chamber, 'that I am not called to a toilet where smiths' hammers and tongs are like to be the instruments most in request!'

'Tell Marcian, my armourer,' said the Count, 'to attend with the silver and blue suit of plate and mail which I won in a wager from the Count of Tholouse.'[1]

'Might I not have the honour of adjusting your armour,' said a splendidly drest courtier, with some marks of the armourer's profession, 'since I have put on that of the Emperor himself, may his name be sacred!'

'And how many rivets hast thou clenched upon the occasion with this hand,' said the Count, catching hold of it, 'which looks as if it had never been washed save with milk of roses, — and with this childish toy?' pointing to a hammer, with ivory haft and silver head, which, stuck into a milk-white kidskin apron, the official wore as badges of his duty.

The armourer fell back in some confusion. 'His grasp,' he said to another domestic, 'is like the seizure of a vice.'

While this little scene passed apart, the Empress Irene, her daughter, and her son-in law left the company, under pretence of making a necessary change in their apparel. Immediately after, Agelastes was required to attend the Emperor, and the strangers were conducted to two adjacent chambers of retirement, splendidly fitted up, and placed for the present at their disposal and that of their attendants. There we shall for a time leave them, assuming, with the assistance of their own attendants, a dress which their ideas regarded as most fit for a great occasion; those of the Grecian court willingly keeping apart from a task which they held nearly as formidable as assisting at the lair of a royal tiger or his bride.

Agelastes found the Emperor sedulously arranging his most splendid court dress; for, as in the court of Pekin, the change of ceremonial attire was a great part of the ritual observed at Constantinople.

'Thou hast done well, wise Agelastes,' said Alexius to the philosopher, as he approached with abundance of prostrations and genuflexions — 'thou hast done well, and we are content with thee. Less than thy wit and address must have failed in separating from their company this tameless bull and unyoked heifer, over whom, if we obtain influence, we shall command, by every account, no small interest among those who esteem them the bravest in the host.'

[1] See Note 8.

'My humble understanding,' said Agelastes, 'had been
finitely inferior to the management of so prudent and sagacio
a scheme, had it not been shaped forth and suggested by t
inimitable wisdom of your Most Sacred Imperial Highness.

'We are aware,' said Alexius, 'that we had the merit
blocking forth the scheme of detaining these persons, either
their choice as allies or by main force as hostages. The
friends, ere yet they have missed them, will be engaged in w
with the Turks, and at no liberty, if the devil should sugge
such an undertaking, to take arms against the sacred empir
Thus, Agelastes, we shall obtain hostages at least as importa
and as valuable as that Count of Vermandois, whose libert
the tremendous Godfrey of Bouillon extorted from us by threa
of instant war.'

'Pardon,' said Agelastes, 'if I add another reason to thos
which of themselves so happily support your august resolution
It is possible that we may, by observing the greatest cautio
and courtesy towards these strangers, win them in good earnes
to our side.'

'I conceive you — I conceive you,' said the Emperor; 'an
this very night I will exhibit myself to this count and hi
lady in the royal presence-chamber, in the richest robe
which our wardrobe can furnish. The lions of Solomon shal
roar, the golden tree of Comnenus shall display its wonders
and the feeble eyes of these Franks shall be altogether dazzle
by the splendour of the empire. These spectacles cannot fai
sink into their minds, and dispose them to become the allies
and servants of a nation so much more powerful, skilful, an
wealthy than their own. Thou hast something to say, Age
lastes. Years and long study have made thee wise; though
we have given our opinion, thou mayst speak thine own and
live.'

Thrice three times did Agelastes press his brow against the
hem of the Emperor's garment, and great seemed his anxiety
to find such words as might intimate his dissent from his
sovereign, yet save him from the informality of contradicting
him expressly.

'These sacred words, in which your Sacred Highness has
uttered your most just and accurate opinions, are undeniable,
and incapable of contradiction, were any vain enough to attempt
to impugn them. Nevertheless, be it lawful to say, that men
show the wisest arguments in vain to those who do not under-
stand reason, just as you would in vain exhibit a curious piece

of limning to the blind, or endeavour to bribe, as Scripture saith, a sow by the offer of a precious stone. The fault is not, in such case, in the accuracy of your sacred reasoning, but in the obtuseness and perverseness of the barbarians to whom it is applied.'

'Speak more plainly,' said the Emperor; 'how often must we tell thee that, in cases in which we really want counsel, we know we must be contented to sacrifice ceremony?'

'Then, in plain words,' said Agelastes, 'these European barbarians are like no others under the cope of the universe, either in the things on which they look with desire or in those which they consider as discouraging. The treasures of this noble empire, so far as they affected their wishes, would merely inspire them with the desire to go to war with a nation possessed of so much wealth, and who, in their self-conceited estimation, were less able to defend than they themselves are powerful to assail. Of such a description, for instance, is Bohemond of Tarentum, and such a one is many a crusader less able and sagacious than he; for I think I need not tell your Imperial Divinity that he holds his own self-interest to be the devoted guide of his whole conduct through this extraordinary war; and that, therefore, you can justly calculate his course when once you are aware from which point of the compass the wind of avarice and self interest breathes with respect to him. But there are spirits among the Franks of a very different nature, and who must be acted upon by very different motives, if we would make ourselves masters of their actions and the principles by which they are governed. If it were lawful to do so, I would request your Majesty to look at the manner by which an artful juggler of your court achieves his imposition upon the eyes of spectators, yet heedfully disguises the means by which he attains his object. This people — I mean the more lofty-minded of these crusaders, who act up to the pretences of the doctrine which they call chivalry — despise the thirst of gold, and gold itself, unless to hilt their swords, or to furnish forth some necessary expenses, as alike useless and contemptible. The man who can be moved by the thirst of gain they contemn, scorn, and despise, and liken him, in the meanness of his objects, to the most paltry serf that ever followed the plough or wielded the spade. On the other hand, if it happens that they actually need gold, they are sufficiently unceremonious in taking it where they can most easily find it. Thus, they are neither easily to be bribed by giving them sums

of gold nor to be starved into compliance by withholding w
chance may render necessary for them. In the one case, t
set no value upon the gift of a little paltry yellow dross; on
other, they are accustomed to take what they want.'

'Yellow dross!' interrupted Alexius. 'Do they call t
noble metal, equally respected by Roman and barbarian,
rich and poor, by great and mean, by churchmen and layn
which all mankind are fighting for, plotting for, planning
intriguing for, and damning themselves for, both soul
body, by the opprobrious name of yellow dross? They
mad, Agelastes — utterly mad. Perils and dangers, penal
and scourges, are the only arguments to which men who
above the universal influence which moves all others can
sibly be accessible.'

'Nor are they,' said Agelastes, 'more accessible to fear t
they are to self-interest. They are indeed, from their boyh
brought up to scorn those passions which influence ordin
minds, whether by means of avarice to impel or of fear to h
back. So much is this the case, that what is enticing to ot
men must, to interest them, have the piquant sauce of extre
danger. I told, for instance, to this very hero a legend o
Princess of Zulichium, who lay on an enchanted couch, beau
ful as an angel, awaiting the chosen knight who should,
dispelling her enchanted slumbers, become master of her pers
of her kingdom of Zulichium, and of her countless treasur
and, would your Imperial Majesty believe me, I could sca
get the gallant to attend to my legend, or take any interest
the adventure, till I assured him he would have to encounte
winged dragon, compared to which the largest of those in
Frank romances was but like a mere dragon-fly?'

'And did this move the gallant?' said the Emperor.

'So much so,' replied the philosopher, 'that, had I not
fortunately, by the earnestness of my description, awaken
the jealousy of his Penthesilea of a countess, he had forgott
the crusade and all belonging to it, to go in quest of Zulichi
and its slumbering sovereign.'

'Nay, then,' said the Emperor, 'we have in our empire
make us sensible of the advantage! — innumerable tale-tell
who are not possessed in the slightest degree of that no
scorn of gold which is proper to the Franks, but shall, fo
brace of besants, lie with the devil, and beat him to boot, if
that manner we can gain, as mariners say, the weather-gage
the Franks.'

'Discretion,' said Agelastes, 'is in the highest degree necessary. Simply to lie is no very great matter: it is merely a departure from the truth, which is little different from missing a mark at archery, where the whole horizon, one point alone excepted, will alike serve the shooter's purpose; but to move the Frank as is desired requires a perfect knowledge of his temper and disposition, great caution and presence of mind, and the most versatile readiness in changing from one subject to another. Had I not myself been somewhat alert, I might have paid the penalty of a false step in your Majesty's service by being flung into my own cascade by the virago whom I offended.'

'A perfect Thalestris!' said the Emperor. 'I shall take care what offence I give her.'

'If I might speak and live,' said Agelastes, 'the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius had best adopt the same precaution.'

'Nicephorus,' said the Emperor, 'must settle that with our daughter. I have ever told her that she gives him too much of that history, of which a page or two is sufficiently refreshing; but by our own self we must swear it, Agelastes, that, night after night, hearing nothing else would subdue the patience of a saint. Forget, good Agelastes, that thou hast heard me say such a thing — more especially, remember it not when thou art in presence of our imperial wife and daughter.'

'Nor were the freedoms taken by the Cæsar beyond the bounds of an innocent gallantry,' said Agelastes; 'but the Countess, I must needs say, is dangerous. She killed this day the Scythian Toxartis, by what seemed a mere fillip on the head.'

'Hah!' said the Emperor, 'I knew that Toxartis, and he was like enough to deserve his death, being a bold, unscrupulous marauder. Take notes, however, how it happened, the names of witnesses, etc., that, if necessary, we may exhibit the fact as a deed of aggression on the part of the Count and Countess of Paris, to the assembly of the crusaders.'

'I trust,' said Agelastes, 'your Imperial Majesty will not easily resign the golden opportunity of gaining to your standard persons whose character stands so very high in chivalry. It would cost you but little to bestow upon them a Grecian island, worth a hundred of their own paltry lordship of Paris; and if it were given under the condition of their expelling the infidels or the disaffected who may have obtained the temporary possession, it would be so much the more likely to be an accept-

able offer. I need not say that the whole knowledge, wisd
and skill of the poor Agelastes is at your Imperial Majest
disposal.'

'The Emperor paused for a moment, and then said, as if
full consideration, 'Worthy Agelastes, I dare trust thee in t
difficult and somewhat dangerous matter; but I will keep
purpose of exhibiting to them the lions of Solomon and
golden tree of our imperial house.'

'To that there can be no objection,' returned the philosoph
'only remember to exhibit few guards, for these Franks
like a fiery horse: when in temper he may be ridden with
silk thread, but when he has taken umbrage or suspicion,
they would likely do if they saw many armed men, a st
bridle would not restrain him.'

'I will be cautious,' said the Emperor, 'in that particul
as well as others. Sound the silver bell, Agelastes, that t
officers of our wardrobe may attend.'

'One single word while your Highness is alone,' said Agelast
'Will your Imperial Majesty transfer to me the direction
your menagerie or collection of extraordinary creatures?'

'You make me wonder,' said the Emperor, taking a signe
bearing upon it a lion, with the legend, *Vicit Leo ex tribu Jud*
'This,' he said, 'will give thee the command of our dens. A
now be candid for once with thy master, for deception is th
nature even with me — by what charm wilt thou subdue the
untamed savages?'

'By the power of falsehood,' replied Agelastes, with dee
reverence.

'I believe thee an adept in it,' said the Emperor. 'And t
which of their foibles wilt thou address it?'

'To their love of fame,' said the philosopher; and retreate
backwards out of the royal apartment, as the officers of th
wardrobe entered to complete the investment of the Empero
in his imperial habiliments.

CHAPTER XIV

I will converse with iron-witted 'ools,
And unrespective boys; none are for me,
That look into me with considerate eyes;—
High-reaching Buckingham grows circumspect

Richard III.

AS they parted from each other, the Emperor and philosopher had each their own anxious thoughts on the interview which had past between them – thoughts which they expressed in broken sentences and ejaculations, though, for the better understanding of the degree of estimation in which they held each other, we will give them a more regular and intelligible form.

'Thus, then,' half-muttered, half-said Alexius, but so low as to hide his meaning from the officers of the wardrobe, who entered to do their office – 'thus, then, this bookworm, this remnant of old heathen philosophy, who hardly believes, so God save me, the truth of the Christian creed, has topped his part so well that he forces his Emperor to dissemble in his presence. Beginning by being the buffoon of the court, he has wormed himself into all its secrets, made himself master of all its intrigues, conspired with my own son-in-law against me, debauched my guards – indeed so woven his web of deceit, that my life is safe no longer than he believes me the imperial dolt which I have affected to seem, in order to deceive him; fortunate that even so I can escape his cautionary anticipation of my displeasure, by avoiding to precipitate his measures of violence. But, were this sudden storm of the crusade fairly passed over, the ungrateful Cæsar, the boastful coward Achilles Tatius, and the bosom serpent Agelastes shall know whether Alexius Comnenus has been born their dupe. When Greek meets Greek, comes the strife of subtlety,'as well as the tug of war.' Thus saying, he resigned himself to the officers of his wardrobe, who proceeded to ornament him as the solemnity required.

'I trust him not,' said Agelastes, the meaning of wh gestures and exclamations we, in like manner, render into connected meaning. 'I cannot and do not trust him: somewhat overacts his part. He has borne himself upon oth occasions with the shrewd wit of his family the Comneni; y he now trusts to the effect of his trumpery lions upon su a shrewd people as the Franks and Normans, and seems rely upon me for the character of men with whom he h been engaged in peace and war for many years. This can but to gain my confidence; for there were imperfect looks an broken sentences which seemed to say, "Agelastes, the Empe knows thee, and confides not in thee." Yet the plot is ful and undiscovered, as far as can be judged; and were I attempt to recede now, I were lost for ever. A little time carry on this intrigue with the Frank, when possibly, by th assistance of this gallant, Alexius shall exchange the crown fo a cloister, or a still narrower abode; and then, Agelastes, tho deservest to be blotted from the roll of philosophers if tho canst not push out of the throne the conceited and luxurious Cæsar, and reign in his stead, a second Marcus Antoninus, whe the wisdom of thy rule, long unfelt in a world which has bee guided by tyrants and voluptuaries, shall soon obliterate reco lection of the manner in which thy power was acquired. T work then — be active, and be cautious. The time requires it, and the prize deserves it.'

While these thoughts passed through his mind, he arrayed himself, by the assistance of Diogenes, in a clean suit of that simple apparel in which he always frequented the court a garb as unlike that of a candidate for royalty as it was a contrast to the magnificent robes with which Alexius was now investing himself.

In their separate apartments, or dressing-rooms, the Count of Paris and his lady put on the best apparel which they had prepared to meet such a chance upon their journey. Even in France, Robert was seldom seen in the peaceful cap and sweeping mantle whose high plumes and flowing folds were the garb of knights in times of peace. He was now arrayed in a splendid suit of armour, all except the head, which was bare otherwise than as covered by his curled locks. The rest of his person was sheathed in the complete mail of the time, richly inlaid with silver, which contrasted with the azure in which the steel was damasked. His spurs were upon his heels, his sword was by his side, and his triangular shield was suspended round his

neck, bearing, painted upon it, a number of *fleurs-de-lis semées*, as it is called, upon the field, being the origin of those lily flowers which after times reduced to three only, and which were the terror of Europe, until they suffered so many reverses in our own time.

The extreme height of Count Robert's person adapted him for a garb which had a tendency to make persons of a lower stature appear rather dwarfish and thick when arrayed *cap-à-pie*. The features, with their self-collected composure, and noble contempt of whatever could have astounded or shaken an ordinary mind, formed a well-fitted capital to the excellently proportioned and vigorous frame which they terminated. The Countess was in more peaceful attire; but her robes were short and succinct, like those of one who might be called to hasty exercise. The upper part of her dress consisted of more than one tunic, sitting close to the body, while a skirt, descending from the girdle, and reaching to the ankles, embroidered elegantly but richly, completed an attire which a lady might have worn in much more modern times. Her tresses were covered with a light steel head-piece, though some of them, escaping, played round her face, and gave relief to those handsome features which might otherwise have seemed too formal, if closed entirely within the verge of steel. Over these under-garments was flung a rich velvet cloak of a deep green colour, descending from the head, where a species of hood was loosely adjusted over the helmet, deeply laced upon its verges and seams, and so long as to sweep the ground behind. A dagger of rich materials ornamented a girdle of curious goldsmith's work, and was the only offensive weapon which, notwithstanding her military occupation, she bore upon this occasion.

The toilet, as modern times would say, of the Countess was not nearly so soon ended as that of Count Robert, who occupied his time, as husbands of every period are apt to do, in little sub-acid complaints between jest and earnest upon the dilatory nature of ladies, and the time which they lose in doffing and donning their garments. But when the Countess Brenhilda came forth in the pride of loveliness from the inner chamber where she had attired herself, her husband, who was still her lover, clasped her to his breast, and expressed his privilege by the kiss which he took as of right from a creature so beautiful. Chiding him for his folly, yet almost returning the kiss which she received, Brenhilda began now to wonder how they were to find their way to the presence of the Emperor.

The query was soon solved, for a gentle knock at the do announced Agelastes, to whom, as best acquainted with th Frankish manners, had been committed by the Emperor th charge of introducing the noble strangers. A distant soun like that of the roaring of a lion, or not unsimilar to a larg and deep gong of modern times, intimated the commencemen of the ceremonial. The black slaves upon guard, who, as hat been observed, were in small numbers, stood ranged in thei state dresses of white and gold, bearing in one hand a nake sabre, and in the other a torch of white wax, which serve to guide the Count and Countess through the passages tha led to the interior of the palace, and to the most secret hal of audience.

The door of this *sanctum sanctorum* was lower than usual, a simple stratagem devised by some superstitious officer of the imperial household to compel the lofty-crested Frank to lowe his body as he presented himself in the imperial presence Robert, when the door flew open, and he discovered in the background the Emperor seated upon his throne amidst a glare of light, which was broken and reflected in ten thousand folds by the jewels with which his vestments were covered, stoppe short, and demanded the meaning of introducing him through so low an arch? Agelastes pointed to the Emperor, by way of shifting from himself a question which he could not have answered. The mute, to apologise for his silence, yawned, and showed the loss of his tongue.

'Holy Virgin!' said the Countess, 'what can these unhappy Africans have done, to have deserved a condemnation which involves so cruel a fate?'

'The hour of retribution is perhaps come,' said the Count, in a displeased tone, while Agelastes, with such hurry as time and place permitted, entered, making his prostrations and genuflexions, little doubting that the Frank must follow him, and to do so must lower his body to the Emperor. The Count, however, in the height of displeasure at the trick which he conceived had been intended him, turned himself round and entered the presence-chamber with his back purposely turned to the sovereign, and did not face Alexius until he reached the middle of the apartment, when he was joined by the Countess, who had made her approach in a more seemly manner. The Emperor, who had prepared to acknowledge the Count's expected homage in the most gracious manner, found himself now even more unpleasantly circumstanced than when this uncompro

mising Frank had usurped the royal throne in the course of the day.

The officers and nobles who stood around, though a very select number, were more numerous than usual, as the meeting was not held for counsel, but merely for state. These assumed such an appearance of mingled displeasure and confusion as might best suit with the perplexity of Alexius, while the wily features of the Norman-Italian, Bohemond of Tarentum, who was also present, had a singular mixture of fantastical glee and derision. It is the misfortune of the weaker on such occasions, or at least the more timid, to be obliged to take the petty part of winking hard, as if not able to see what they cannot avenge.

Alexius made the signal that the ceremonial of the grand reception should immediately commence. Instantly the lions of Solomon, which had been newly furbished, raised their heads, erected their manes, brandished their tails, until they excited the imagination of Count Robert, who, being already on fire at the circumstances of his reception, conceived the bellowing of these automata to be the actual annunciation of immediate assault. Whether the lions whose forms he beheld were actually lords of the forest, whether they were mortals who had suffered transformation, whether they were productions of the skill of an artful juggler or profound naturalist, the Count neither knew nor cared. All that he thought of the danger was, that it was worthy of his courage; nor did his heart permit him a moment's irresolution. He strode to the nearest lion, which seemed in the act of springing up, and said, in a tone loud and formidable as its own, 'How now, dog!' At the same time he struck the figure with his clenched fist and steel gauntlet with so much force that its head burst, and the steps and carpet of the throne were covered with wheels, springs, and other machinery, which had been the means of producing its mimic terrors.

On this display of the real nature of the cause of his anger, Count Robert could not but feel a little ashamed of having given way to passion on such an occasion. He was still more confused when Bohemond, descending from his station near the Emperor, addressed him in the Frank language — 'You have done a gallant deed, truly, Count Robert, in freeing the court of Byzantium from an object of fear which has long been used to frighten peevish children and unruly barbarians!'

Enthusiasm has no greater enemy than ridicule. 'Why, then,' said Count Robert, blushing deeply at the same time,

'did they exhibit its fantastic terrors to me? I am n
child nor barbarian.'

'Address yourself to the Emperor, then, as an intel
man,' answered Bohemond. 'Say something to him in e
of your conduct, and show that our bravery has not en
run away with our common sense. And hark you also,
I have a moment's speech of you: do you and your wife
fully follow my example at supper.' These words were sp
with a significant tone and corresponding look.

The opinion of Bohemond, from his long intercourse,
in peace and war, with the Grecian Emperor, gave him
influence with the other crusaders, and Count Robert yi
to his advice. He turned towards the Emperor with somet
liker an obeisance than he had hitherto paid. 'I crave
pardon,' he said, 'for breaking that gilded piece of pagea
but, in sooth, the wonders of sorcery and the portent
accomplished and skilful jugglers are so numerous in
country that one does not clearly distinguish what is true
what is false, or what is real from what is illusory.'

The Emperor, notwithstanding the presence of mind
which he was remarkable, and the courage in which he
not held by his countrymen to be deficient, received
apology somewhat awkwardly. Perhaps the rueful com
sance with which he accepted the Count's apology migh
best compared to that of a lady of the present day whe
awkward guest has broken a valuable piece of china.
muttered something about the machines having been long
served in the imperial family, as being made on the mod
those which guarded the throne of the wise king of Israel
which the blunt, plain-spoken Count expressed his doub
reply, whether the wisest prince in the world ever condescen
to frighten his subjects or guests by the mimic roarings
wooden lion. 'If,' said he, 'I too hastily took it for a liv
creature, I have had the worst, by damaging my excel
gauntlet in dashing to pieces its timber skull.'

The Emperor, after a little more had been said, chiefly
the same subject, proposed that they should pass to
banquet-room. Marshalled, accordingly, by the grand se
of the imperial table, and attended by all present, except
the Emperor and the immediate members of his family,
Frankish guests were guided through a labyrinth of ap
ments, each of which was filled with wonders of nature and
calculated to enhance their opinion of the wealth and grand

which had assembled together so much that was wonderful. Their passage, being necessarily slow and interrupted, gave the Emperor time to change his dress, according to the ritual of his court, which did not permit his appearing twice in the same vesture before the same spectators. He took the opportunity to summon Agelastes into his presence, and, that their conference might be secret, he used, in assisting his toilet, the agency of some of the mutes destined for the service of the interior.

The temper of Alexius Comnenus was considerably moved, although it was one of the peculiarities of his situation to be ever under the necessity of disguising the emotions of his mind, and of affecting, in presence of his subjects, a superiority to human passion which he was far from feeling. It was therefore with gravity, and even reprehension, that he asked, 'By whose error it was that the wily Bohemond, half-Italian and half-Norman, was present at this interview? Surely, if there be one in the crusading army likely to conduct that foolish youth and his wife behind the scenes of the exhibition by which we hoped to impose upon them, the Count of Tarentum, as he entitles himself, is that person.'

'It was that old man,' said Agelastes — 'if I may reply and live — Michael Cantacuzene, who deemed that his presence was peculiarly desired; but he returns to the camp this very night.'

'Yes,' said Alexius, 'to inform Godfrey and the rest of the crusaders that one of the boldest and most highly esteemed of their number is left, with his wife, a hostage in our imperial city, and to bring back, perhaps, an alternative of instant war, unless they are delivered up!'

'If it is your Imperial Highness's will to think so,' said Agelastes, 'you can suffer Count Robert and his wife to return to the camp with the Italian-Norman.'

'What!' answered the Emperor, 'and so lose all the fruits of an enterprise the preparations for which have already cost us so much in actual expense; and, were our heart made of the same stuff with that of ordinary mortals, would have cost us so much more in vexation and anxiety? No — no; issue warning to the crusaders who are still on the hither side that farther rendering of homage is dispensed with, and that they repair to the quays on the banks of the Bosphorus by peep of light to-morrow. Let our admiral, as he values his head, pass every man of them over to the farther side before noon. Let there be largesses, a princely banquet on the farther bank — all

that may increase their anxiety to pass. Then, Agelastes will trust to ourselves to meet this additional danger, either bribing the venality of Bohemond or by bidding defiance the crusaders. Their forces are scattered, and the chief them, with the leaders themselves, are all now — or by far greater part — on the east side of the Bosphorus. And now the banquet, seeing that the change of dress has been made sufficient to answer the statutes of the household, since our ancestors chose to make rules for exhibiting us to our subjects as priests exhibit their images at their shrines.'

'Under grant of life,' said Agelastes, 'it was not done considerately, but in order that the emperor, ruled ever by the same laws from father to son, might ever be regarded as something beyond the common laws of humanity — the divine image of a saint, therefore, rather than a human being.'

'We know it, good Agelastes,' answered the Emperor, with a smile, 'and we are also aware that many of our subjects, like the worshippers of Bel in Holy Writ, treat us so far as an image as to assist us in devouring the revenues of our provinces, which are gathered in our name and for our use. These things we now only touch lightly, the time not suiting them.'

Alexius left the secret council accordingly, after the order for the passage of the crusaders had been written out and subscribed in due form, and in the sacred ink of the imperial chancery.

Meantime, the rest of the company had arrived in a hall which, like the other apartments in the palace, was most tastefully as well as gorgeously fitted up, except that a table which presented a princely banquet, might have been deemed faulty in this respect, that the dishes, which were most splendid, both in the materials of which they were composed and in the viands which they held, were elevated by means of feet, so as to be upon a level with female guests as they sat and with men as they lay recumbent, at the banquet which was offered.

Around stood a number of black slaves richly attired, while the grand sewer, Michael Cantacuzene, arranged the strangers with his golden wand, and conveyed orders to them, by signs that all should remain standing around the table until a sign should be given.

The upper end of the board, thus furnished and thus surrounded, was hidden by a curtain of muslin and silver, which

fell from the top of the arch under which the upper part seemed to pass. On this curtain the sewer kept a wary eye; and when he observed it slightly shake, he waved his wand of office, and all expected the result.

As if self-moved, the mystic curtain arose, and discovered behind it a throne eight steps higher than the end of the table, decorated in the most magnificent manner, and having placed before it a small table of ivory inlaid with silver, behind which was seated Alexius Comnenus, in a dress entirely different from what he had worn in the course of the day, and so much more gorgeous than his former vestments, that it seemed not unnatural that his subjects should prostrate themselves before a figure so splendid. His wife, his daughter, and his son-in-law the Cæsar stood behind him with faces bent to the ground, and it was with deep humility that, descending from the throne at the Emperor's command, they mingled with the guests of the lower table, and, exalted as they were, proceeded to the festive board at the signal of the grand sewer; so that they could not be said to partake of the repast with the Emperor nor to be placed at the imperial table, although they supped in his presence, and were encouraged by his repeated request to them to make good cheer. No dishes presented at the lower table were offered at the higher; but wines and more delicate sorts of food, which arose before the Emperor as if by magic, and seemed designed for his own proper use, were repeatedly sent, by his special directions, to one or other of the guests whom Alexius delighted to honour, among these the Franks being particularly distinguished.

The behaviour of Bohemond was on this occasion particularly remarkable.

Count Robert, who kept an eye upon him, both from his recent words and owing to an expressive look which he once or twice darted towards him, observed, that in no liquors or food, not even those sent from the Emperor's own table, did this astucious prince choose to indulge. A piece of bread, taken from the canister at random, and a glass of pure water was the only refreshment of which he was pleased to partake. His alleged excuse was the veneration due to the Holy Festival of the Advent, which chanced to occur that very night, and which both the Greek and Latin rule agreed to hold sacred.

'I had not expected this of you, Sir Bohemond,' said the Emperor, 'that you should have refused my personal hospitality at my own board, on the very day on which you honoured me

by entering into my service as vassal for the principality
Antioch.'

'Antioch is not yet conquered,' said Sir Bohemond; 'a
conscience, dread sovereign, must always have its exceptions
whatever temporal contracts we may engage.'

'Come, gentle count,' said the Emperor, who obviously r
garded Bohemond's inhospitable humour as something arisi
more from suspicion than devotion, 'we invite, though it is n
our custom, our children, our noble guests, and our princip
officers here present to a general carouse. Fill the cups call
the Nine Muses; let them be brimful of the wine which is sai
to be sacred to the imperial lips.'

At the Emperor's command the cups were filled; they we
of pure gold, and there was richly engraved upon each th
effigy of the Muse to whom it was dedicated.

'You at least,' said the Emperor, 'my gentle Count Robert
you and your lovely lady, will not have any scruple to pledg
your imperial host?'

'If that scruple is to imply suspicion of the provisions wit
which we are here served, I disdain to nourish such,' sai
Count Robert. 'If it is a sin which I commit by tasting win
to-night, it is a venial one; nor shall I greatly augment my
load by carrying it, with the rest of my trespasses, to the nex
confessional.'

'Will you then, Prince Bohemond, not be ruled by the
conduct of your friend?' said the Emperor.

'Methinks,' replied the Norman-Italian, 'my friend might
have done better to have been ruled by mine; but be it as his
wisdom pleases. The flavour of such exquisite wine is sufficient
for me.'

So saying, he emptied the wine into another goblet, and
seemed alternately to admire the carving of the cup and the
flavour of what it had lately contained.

'You are right, Sir Bohemond,' said the Emperor, 'the
fabric of that cup is beautiful; it was done by one of the
ancient gravers of Greece. The boasted cup of Nestor, which
Homer has handed down to us, was a good deal larger perhaps,
but neither equalled these in the value of the material nor the
exquisite beauty of the workmanship. Let each one, therefore,
of my stranger guests accept of the cup which he either has or
might have drunk out of, as a recollection of me; and may the
expedition against the infidels be as propitious as their con-
fidence and courage deserve!'

'If I accept your gift, mighty emperor,' said Bohemond, 'it is only to atone for the apparent discourtesy, when my devotion compels me to decline your imperial pledge, and to show you that we part on the most intimate terms of friendship.'

So saying, he bowed deeply to the Emperor, who answered him with a smile, into which was thrown a considerable portion of sarcastic expression.

'And I,' said the Count of Paris, 'having taken upon my conscience the fault of meeting your imperial pledge, may stand excused from incurring the blame of adding to dismantle your table of these curious drinking-cups. We empty them to your health, and we cannot in any other respect profit by them.'

'But Prince Bohemond can,' said the Emperor; 'to whose quarters they shall be carried, sanctioned by your generous use. And we have still a set for you, and for your lovely countess, equal to that of the Graces, though no longer matching in number the nymphs of Parnassus. The evening bell rings, and calls us to remember the hour of rest, that we may be ready to meet the labours of to-morrow.'

The party then broke up for the evening. Bohemond left the palace that night, not forgetting the Muses, of whom he was not in general a devotee. The result was, as the wily Greek had intended, that he had established between Bohemond and the Count, not indeed a quarrel, but a kind of difference of opinion, Bohemond feeling that the fiery Count of Paris must think his conduct sordid and avaricious, while Count Robert was far less inclined than before to rely on him as a counsellor.

CHAPTER XV

THE Count of Paris and his lady were that night lo in the Imperial Palace of Blacquernal. Their ap ments were contiguous, but the communication betw them was cut off for the night by the mutual door being lo .id barred. They marvelled somewhat at this precaution. observance, however, of the festival of the church was plea as an admissible, and not unnatural, excuse for this extrao nary circumstance. Neither the Count nor his lady entertai it may be believed, the slightest personal fear for anyth which could happen to them. Their attendants, Marcian Agatha, having assisted their master and mistress in the p formance of their usual offices, left them, in order to seek places of repose assigned to them among persons of th degree.

The preceding day had been one of excitation, and of m bustle and interest; perhaps, also, the wine, sacred to imperial lips, of which Count Robert had taken a sin indeed, but a deep draught, was more potent than the delic and high-flavoured juice of the Gascogne grape, to which was accustomed; at any rate, it seemed to him that, from time he felt that he had slept, daylight ought to have b broad in his chamber when he awaked, and yet it was s darkness almost palpable. Somewhat surprised, he gaz eagerly around, but could discern nothing, except two bu of red light which shone from among the darkness with a s emitted brilliancy, like the eyes of a wild animal while it gla upon its prey. The Count started from bed to put on armour, a necessary precaution if what he saw should really a wild creature and at liberty; but the instant he stirred, deep growl was uttered, such as the Count had never hea but which might be compared to the sound of a thousa monsters at once; and, as the symphony, was heard the cla of iron chains, and the springing of a monstrous creatu

towards the bedside, which appeared, however, to be withheld by some fastening from attaining the end of its bound. The roars which it uttered now ran thick on each other. They were most tremendous, and must have been heard throughout the whole palace. The creature seemed to gather itself many yards nearer to the bed than by its glaring eyeballs it appeared at first to be stationed, and how much nearer, or what degree of motion might place him within the monster's reach, the Count was totally uncertain. Its breathing was even heard, and Count Robert thought he felt the heat of its respiration, while his defenceless limbs might not be two yards distant from the fangs which he heard grinding against each other, and the claws which tore up fragments of wood from the oaken floor. The Count of Paris was one of the bravest men who lived in a time when bravery was the universal property of all who claimed a drop of noble blood, and the knight was a descendant of Charlemagne. He was, however, a man, and therefore cannot be said to have endured unappalled a sense of danger so unexpected and so extraordinary. But his was not a sudden alarm or panic: it was a calm sense of extreme peril, qualified by a resolution to exert his faculties to the uttermost, to save his life if it were possible. He withdrew himself within the bed, no longer a place of rest, being thus a few feet further from the two glaring eyeballs which remained so closely fixed upon him that, in spite of his courage, nature painfully suggested the bitter imagination of his limbs being mangled, torn, and churned with their life-blood, in the jaws of some monstrous beast of prey. One saving thought alone presented itself: this might be a trial, an experiment of the philosopher Agelastes, or of the Emperor his master, for the purpose of proving the courage of which the Christians vaunted so highly, and punishing the thoughtless insult which the Count had been unadvised enough to put upon the Emperor the preceding day.

'Well is it said,' he reflected in his agony, 'beard not the lion in his den. Perhaps even now some base slave deliberates whether I have yet tasted enough of the preliminary agonies of death, and whether he shall yet slip the chain which keeps the savage from doing his work. But come death when it will, it shall never be said that Count Robert was heard to receive it with prayers for compassion or with cries of pain or terror.' He turned his face to the wall, and waited, with a strong mental exertion, the death which he conceived to be fast approaching.

His first feelings had been unavoidably of a selfish nature.

The danger was too instant, and of a description too hor
to admit of any which involved a more comprehensive
of his calamity; and other reflections of a more distant
were at first swallowed up in the all-engrossing thought of
mediate death. But as his ideas became clearer, the safe
his countess rushed upon his mind — what might she no
suffering! and, while he was subjected to a trial so ext
dinary, for what were her weaker frame and female con
reserved? Was she still within a few yards of him, as w
he lay down the last night? or had the barbarians, who
devised for him a scene so cruel, availed themselves of his
his lady's incautious confidence to inflict upon her some villa
of the same kind, or even yet m perfidious? Did she s
or wake, or could she sleep wit. .. the close hearing of
horrible cry, which shook all around? He resolved to u
her name, warning her if possible, to be upon her guard,
to answer without venturing rashly into the apartment wh
contained a guest so horribly perilous.

He uttered, therefore, his wife's name, but in trembl
accents, as if he had been afraid of the savage beast overhear
him.

'Brenhilda — Brenhilda, there is danger; awake and sp
to me, but do not arise.' There was no answer. 'What ar
become,' he said to himself, 'that I call upon Brenhilda
Aspramonte, like a child on its sleeping nurse, and all becau
there is a wild cat in the same room with me? Shame on th
Count of Paris! Let thy arms be rent and thy spurs be hack
from thy heels! What ho!' he cried aloud, but still with
tremulous voice, 'Brenhilda, we are beset: the foe are up
Answer me, but stir not.'

A deep growl from the monster which garrisoned his apa
ment was the only answer. The sound seemed to say, 'Th
hast no hope'; and it ran to the knight's bosom as the genu
expression of despair.

'Perhaps, however, I am still too cold in making my mise
known. What, ho! my love — Brenhilda!'

A voice, hollow and disconsolate as that which might ha
served an inhabitant of the grave, answered as if from a di
tance. 'What disconsolate wretch art thou, who expects
that the living can answer thee from the habitations of th
dead?'

'I am a Christian man, a free noble of the kingdom
France,' answered the Count, 'yesterday the captain of fi

hundred men, the bravest in France — the bravest, that is, who breathe mortal air — and I am here without a glimpse of light to direct me how to avoid the corner in which lies a wild tiger-cat, prompt to spring upon and to devour me.'

'Thou art an example,' replied the voice, 'and wilt not long be the last, of the changes of fortune. I, who am now suffering in my third year, was that mighty Ursel who rivalled Alexius Comnenus for the crown of Greece, was betrayed by my confederates, and being deprived of that eyesight which is the chief blessing of humanity, I inhabit these vaults, no distant neighbour of the wild animals by whom they are sometimes occupied, and whose cries of joy I hear when unfortunate victims like thyself are delivered up to their fury.'

'Didst thou not then hear,' said Count Robert, in return, 'a warlike guest and his bride conducted hither last night, with sounds as it might seem of bridal music? O, Brenhilda! hast thou, so young, so beautiful, been so treacherously done to death by means so unutterably horrible?'

'Think not,' answered Ursel, as the voice had called its owner, 'that the Greeks pamper their wild beasts on such lordly fare. For their enemies, which term includes not only all that are really such, but all those whom they fear or hate, they have dungeons whose locks never revolve; hot instruments of steel, to sear the eyeballs in the head; lions and tigers, when it pleases them to make a speedy end of their captives — but these are only for the male prisoners. While for the women, if they be young and beautiful, the princes of the land have places in their bed and bower; nor are they employed, like the captives of Agamemnon's host, to draw water from an Argive spring, but are admired and adored by those whom fate has made the lords of their destiny.'

'Such shall never be the doom of Brenhilda,' exclaimed Count Robert: 'her husband still lives to assist her, and should he die, she knows well how to follow him without leaving a blot in the epitaph of either.'

The captive did not immediately reply, and a short pause ensued, which was broken by Ursel's voice. 'Stranger,' he said, 'what noise is that I hear?'

'Nay, I hear nothing,' said Count Robert.

'But I do,' said Ursel. 'The cruel deprivation of my eyesight renders my other senses more acute.'

'Disquiet not thyself about the matter, fellow-prisoner,' answered the Count, 'but wait the event in silence.'

Suddenly a light arose in the apartment, lurid, red smoky. The knight had bethought him of a flint and which he usually carried about him, and with as little no possible had lighted the torch by the bedside; this he inst applied to the curtains of the bed, which, being of thin m were in a moment in flames. The knight sprung at the instant from his bed. The tiger, for such it was, terrifi the flame, leaped backwards as far as his chain would pe heedless of anything save this new object of terror. Robert upon this seized on a massive wooden stool, which the only offensive weapon on which he could lay his hand, marking at those eyes which now reflected the blaze of and which had recently seemed so appalling, he discha against them this fragment of ponderous oak, with a which less resembled human strength than the impetus which an engine hurls a stone. He had employed his im of time so well, and his aim was so true, that the missile right to the mark and with incredible force. The skull of tiger, which might be, perhaps, somewhat exaggerated in scribed as being of the very largest size, was fractured by blow, and with the assistance of his dagger, which had fo nately been left with him, the French count despatched monster, and had the satisfaction to see him grin his last, roll, in the agony of death, those eyes which were lately formidable.

Looking around him, he discovered, by the light of the which he had raised, that the apartment in which he now was different from that in which he had gone to bed overnig nor could there be a stronger contrast between the furni of both than the flickering, half-burnt remains of the muslin curtains, and the strong, bare, dungeon-looking w of the room itself, or the very serviceable wooden stool which he had made such good use.

The knight had no leisure to form conclusions upon suc subject. He hastily extinguished the fire, which had inde nothing that it could lay hold of, and proceeded, by the li of the flambeau, to examine the apartment and its means entrance. It is scarce necessary to say, that he saw no co munication with the room of Brenhilda, which convinced h that they had been separated the evening before, under prete of devotional scruples, in order to accomplish some most villa ous design upon one or both of them. His own part of night's adventure we have already seen; and success so

over so formidable a danger, gave him a trembling hope that Brenhilda, by her own worth and valour, would be able to defend herself against all attacks of fraud or force until he could find his way to her rescue. 'I should have paid more regard,' he said, 'to Bohemond's caution last night, who, I think, intimated to me as plainly as if he had spoke it in direct terms that that same cup of wine was a drugged potion. But then, fie upon him for an avaricious hound! how was it possible I should think he suspected any such thing, when he spoke not out like a man, but, for sheer coldness of heart or base self-interest, suffered me to run the risk of being poisoned by the wily despot?'

Here he heard a voice from the same quarter as before. 'Ho, there! Ho, stranger! Do you live, or have you been murdered? What means this stifling smell of smoke? For God's sake, answer him who can receive no information from eyes closed, alas, for ever!'

'I am at liberty,' said the Count, 'and the monster destined to devour me has groaned its last. I would, my friend Ursel, since such is thy name, thou hadst the advantage of thine eyes, to have borne witness to yonder combat; it had been worth thy while, though thou shouldst have lost them a minute afterwards, and it would have greatly advantaged whoever shall have the task of compiling my history.'

While he gave a thought to that vanity which strongly ruled him, he lost no time in seeking some mode of escape from the dungeon, for by that means only might he hope to recover his countess. At last he found an entrance in the wall, but it was strongly locked and bolted. 'I have found the passage,' he called out; 'and its direction is the same in which thy voice is heard. But how shall I undo the door?'

'I'll teach thee that secret,' said Ursel. 'I would I could as easily unlock each bolt that withholds us from the open air; but as for thy seclusion within the dungeon, heave up the door by main strength, and thou shalt lift the locks to a place where, pushing then the door from thee, the fastenings will find a grooved passage in the wall, and the door itself will open. Would that I could indeed see thee, not only because, being a gallant man, thou must be a goodly sight, but also because I should thereby know that I was not caverned in darkness for ever.'

While he spoke thus, the Count made a bundle of his armour, from which he missed nothing except his sword,

Tranchefer, and then proceeded to try what efforts h
make, according to the blind man's instructions, to ope
door of his prison-house. Pushing in a direct line was, he
found, attended with no effect; but when he applied h
gantic strength, and raised the door as high as it would g
had the satisfaction to find that the bolts yielded, thoug
luctantly. A space had been cu so as to allow them to
out of the socket into which they had been forced; and wi
the turn of a key, but by a powerful thrust forwards, a
passage was left open. The knight entered, bearing his ar
in his hand.

'I hear thee,' said Ursel, 'O stranger! and am aware
art come into my place of captivity. For three years h
been employed in cutting these grooves, corresponding t
sockets which hold these iron bolts, and preserving the k
edge of the secret from the prison-keepers. Twenty such
perhaps, must be sawn through ere my steps shall appr
the upper air. What prospect is there that I shall have stre
of mind sufficient to continue the task? Yet, credit
noble stranger, I rejoice in having been thus far aiding t
deliverance; for if Heaven blesses not, in any farther de
our aspirations after freedom, we may still be a comfort to
other, while tyranny permits our mutual life.'

Count Robert looked around, and shuddered that a hu
being should talk of anything approaching to comfort
nected with his residence in what seemed a living tomb. U
dungeon was not above twelve feet square, vaulted in the
and strongly built in the walls by stones which the chisel
morticed closely together. A bed, a coarse footstool, like
which Robert had just launched at the head of the tiger,
a table of equally massive materials, were its only article
furniture. On a long stone above the bed were these
but terrible, words: — 'Zedekias Ursel, imprisoned here on
Ides of March, A.D. ——. Died and interred on the spot —
A blank was left for filling up the period. The figure of
captive could hardly be discerned amid the wildness of
dress and dishabille. The hair of his head, uncut and uncom
descended in elf-locks, and mingled with a beard of extrava
length.

'Look on me,' said the captive, 'and rejoice that thou c
yet see the wretched condition to which iron-hearted tyra
can reduce a fellow-creature, both in mortal existence an
future hope.'

'Was it thou,' said Count Robert, whose blood ran cold in his veins, 'that hadst the heart to spend thy time in sawing through the blocks of stone by which these bolts are secured?'

'Alas!' said Ursel, 'what could a blind man do? Busy I must be, if I would preserve my senses. Great as the labour was, it was to me the task of three years; nor can you wonder that I should have devoted to it my whole time, when I had no other means of occupying it. Perhaps, and most likely, my dungeon does not admit the distinction of day and night; but a distant cathedral clock told me how hour after hour fled away, and found me expending them in rubbing one stone against another. But when the door gave way, I found I had only cut an access into a prison more strong than that which held me. I rejoice, nevertheless, since it has brought us together, given thee an entrance to my dungeon, and me a companion in my misery.'

'Think better than that,' said Count Robert — 'think of liberty — think of revenge. I cannot believe such unjust treachery will end successfully, else needs must I say the Heavens are less just than priests tell us of. How art thou supplied with food in this dungeon of thine?'

'A warder,' said Ursel, 'and who, I think, understands not the Greek language — at least he never either answers or addresses me — brings a loaf and a pitcher of water, enough to supply my miserable life till two days are past. I must, therefore, pray that you will retire for a space into the next prison, so that the warder may have no means of knowing that we can hold correspondence together.'

'I see not,' said Count Robert, 'by what access the barbarian, if he is one, can enter my dungeon without passing through yours; but no matter, I will retire into the inner or outer room, whichever it happens to be, and be thou then well aware that the warder will have some one to grapple with ere he leaves his prison work to-day. Meanwhile, think thyself dumb as thou art blind, and be assured that the offer of freedom itself would not induce me to desert the cause of a companion in adversity.'

'Alas,' said the old man, 'I listen to thy promises as I should to those of the morning gale, which tells me that the sun is about to arise, although I know that I at least shall never behold it. Thou art one of those wild and undespairing knights whom for so many years the west of Europe hath sent forth to attempt impossibilities, and from thee, therefore, I can

only hope for such a fabric of relief as an idle boy would
out of soap bubbles.'

'Think better of us, old man,' said Count Robert, retir
'at least let me die with my blood warm, and believing it
sible for me to be once more united to my beloved Brenhild

So saying, he retired into his own cell, and replaced
door, so that the operations of Ursel, which indeed were
such as three years' solitude could have achieved, should es
observation when again visited by the warder. 'It is ill lu
said he, when once more within his own prison — for tha
which the tiger had been secured he instinctively concluded
be destined for him — 'it is ill luck that I had not foun
young and able fellow-captive, instead of one decrepit by
prisonment, blind, and broken down past exertion. But G
will be done! I will not leave behind me the poor wre
whom I have found in such a condition, though he is perfe
unable to assist me in accomplishing my escape, and is rat
more likely to retard it. Meantime, before we put out
torch, let us see if, by close examination, we can discover
door in the wall save that to the blind man's dungeon. If
I must suspect that my descent has been made through
roof. That cup of wine — that Muse, as they called it —
taste more like medicine than merry companions' pledge.'

He began accordingly a strict survey of the walls, which
resolved to conclude by extinguishing the torch, that he mi
take the person who should enter his dungeon darkling and
surprise. For a similar reason, he dragged into the dark
corner the carcass of the tiger, and covered it with the rema
of the bedclothes, swearing, at the same time, that a half ti
should be his crest in future, if he had the fortune, which
bold heart would not suffer him to doubt, of getting thro
the present danger. 'But,' he added, 'if these necromanc
vassals of hell shall raise the devil upon me, what shall I
then? And so great is the chance, that methinks I would f
dispense with extinguishing the flambeau. Yet it is childi
for one dubbed in the chapel of Our Lady of the Broken Lan
to make much difference between a light room and a dark o
Let them come, as many fiends as the cell can hold, and
shall see if we receive them not as becomes a Christian knigh
and surely Our Lady, to whom I was ever a true votary, w
hold it an acceptable sacrifice that I tore myself from
Brenhilda, even for a single moment, in honour of her Adve
and thus led the way for our woeful separation. Fiends! I de

ye in the body as in the spirit, and I retain the remains of this flambeau until some more convenient opportunity.' He dashed it against the wall as he spoke, and then quietly sat down in a corner to watch what should next happen.

Thought after thought chased each other through his mind. His confidence in his wife's fidelity, and his trust in her uncommon strength and activity, were the greatest comforts which he had; nor could her danger present itself to him in any shape so terrible, but that he found consolation in these reflections: 'She is pure,' he said, 'as the dew of heaven, and Heaven will not abandon its own.'

CHAPTER XVI

Strange ape of man! who loathes thee while he scorns thee;
Half a reproach to us and half a jest.
What fancies can be ours ere we have pleasure
In viewing our own form, our pride and passions,
Reflected in a shape grotesque as thine?

Anonymous.

COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS, having ensconced him behind the ruins of the bed, so that he could not well observed, unless a strong light was at once flung up the place of his retreat, waited with anxiety how and in w manner the warder of the dungeon, charged with the task bringing food to the prisoners, should make himself visible; was it long ere symptoms of his approach began to be heard observed.

A light was partially seen, as from a trap-door opening the roof, and a voice was heard to utter these words in Ang Saxon, 'Leap, sirrah; come, no delay; leap, my good Sylv show your honour's activity.' A strange, chuckling, hoa voice, in a language totally unintelligible to Count Robe was heard to respond, as if disputing the orders which w received.

'What, sir,' said his companion, 'you must contest the poi must you? Nay, if thou art so lazy, I must give your hone a ladder, and perhaps a kick to hasten your journey.' Som thing then, of very great size, in the form of a human bei jumped down from the trap door, though the height might above fourteen feet. This figure was gigantic, being upwar of seven feet high. In its left hand it held a torch, and in right a skein of fine silk, which, unwinding itself as it descende remained unbroken, though it was easy to conceive it could n have afforded a creature so large any support in his descent fro the roof. He alighted with perfect safety and activity upon h feet, and, as if rebounding from the floor, he sprung upward again, so as almost to touch the roof. In this last gambad the torch which he bore was extinguished; but this extra

dinary warder whirled it round his head with infinite velocity, so that it again ignited. The bearer, who appeared to intend the accomplishment of this object, endeavoured to satisfy himself that it was really attained, by approaching, as if cautiously, its left hand to the flame of the torch. This practical experiment seemed attended with consequences which the creature had not expected, for it howled with pain, shaking the burnt hand, and chattering as if bemoaning itself.

'Take heed there, Sylvanus,' said the same voice in Anglo-Saxon, and in a tone of rebuke. 'Ho, there! mind thy duty, Sylvan. Carry food to the blind man, and stand not there to play thyself, lest I trust thee not again alone on such an errand.'

The creature — for it would have been rash to have termed it a man — turning its eye upwards to the place from whence the voice came, answered with a dreadful grin and shaking of its fist, yet presently began to undo a parcel, and rummage in the pockets of a sort of jerkin and pantaloons which it wore, seeking, it appeared, a bunch of keys, which at length it produced, while it took from the pocket a loaf of bread. Heating the stone of the wall, it affixed the torch to it by a piece of wax, and then cautiously looked out for the entrance to the old man's dungeon, which it opened with a key selected from the bunch. Within the passage it seemed to look for and discover the handle of a pump, at which it filled a pitcher that it bore, and bringing back the fragments of the former loaf, and remains of the pitcher of water, it eat a little, as if it were in sport, and very soon, making a frightful grimace, flung the fragments away. The Count of Paris, in the meanwhile, watched anxiously the proceedings of this unknown animal. His first thought was, that the creature, whose limbs were so much larger than humanity, whose grimaces were so frightful, and whose activity seemed supernatural, could be no other than the Devil himself, or some of his imps, whose situation and office in these gloomy regions seemed by no means hard to conjecture. The human voice, however, which he had heard was less that of a necromancer conjuring a fiend than that of a person giving commands to a wild animal, over whom he had, by training, obtained a great superiority.

'A shame on it,' said the Count, 'if I suffer a common jack-anapes — for such I take this devil-seeming beast to be, although twice as large as any of its fellows whom I have ever seen — to throw an obstacle in the way of my obtaining daylight and

freedom! Let us but watch, and the chance is that we
that furry gentleman our guide to the upper regions.'

Meantime the creature, which rummaged about everyw
at length discovered the body of the tiger, touche
it, with many strange motions, and seemed to lament
wonder at its death. At once it seemed struck with the
that some one must have slain it, and Count Robert had
mortification to see it once more select the key, and s
towards the door of Ursel's prison with such alacrity that,
its intention been to strangle him, it would have accompli
its purpose before the interference of Count Robert could
prevented its revenge taking place. Apparently, howeve
reflected that, for reasons which seemed satisfactory, the d
of the tiger could not be caused by the unfortunate Ursel,
had been accomplished by some one concealed within the
prison.

Slowly grumbling, therefore, and chattering to itself,
peeping anxiously into every corner, the tremendous creat
so like, yet so very unlike, to the human form, came stea
along the walls, moving whatever he thought could seclu
man from his observation. Its extended legs and arms
protruded forward with great strides, and its sharp eyes, on
watch to discover the object of its search, kept prying, with
assistance of the torch, into every corner.

Considering the vicinity of Alexius's collection of anim
the reader, by this time, can have little doubt that the crea
question, whose appearance seemed to the Count of Pari
very problematical, was a specimen of that gigantic specie
ape — if it is not indeed some animal more nearly allied to
selves — to which, I believe, naturalists have given the nam
the ourang-outang. This creature differs from the rest of
fraternity, in being comparatively more docile and serviceal
and though possessing the power of imitation which is comm
to the whole race, yet making use of it less in mere mock
than in the desire of improvement and instruction perfe
unknown to his brethren. The aptitude which it possesse
acquiring information is surprisingly great, and probably
placed in a favourable situation, it might admit of being don
ticated in a considerable degree; but such advantages
ardour of scientific curiosity has never afforded this creat
The last we have heard of was seen, we believe, in the Isl
of Sumatra; it was of great size and strength, and upward
seven feet high. It died defending desperately its innoc

life against a party of Europeans, who, we cannot help thinking, might have better employed the superiority which their knowledge gave them over the poor native of the forest. It was probably this creature, seldom seen, but when once seen never forgotten, which occasioned the ancient belief in the god Pan, with his sylvans and satyrs. Nay, but for the gift of speech, which we cannot suppose any of the family to have attained, we should have believed the satyr seen by St. Anthony in the desert to have belonged to this tribe.

We can, therefore, the more easily credit the annals which attest that the collection of natural history belonging to Alexius Comnenus preserved an animal of this kind, which had been domesticated and reclaimed to a surprising extent, and showed a degree of intelligence never perhaps to be attained in any other case. These explanations being premised, we return to the thread of our story.

The animal advanced with long noiseless steps; its shadow on the wall, when it held the torch so as to make it visible to the Frank, forming another fiend-resembling mimicry of its own large figure and extravagant-looking members. Count Robert remained in his lurking-hole, in no hurry to begin a strife of which it was impossible to foretell the end. In the meantime, the man of the woods came nigh, and every step by which he approached caused the Count's heart to vibrate almost audibly, at the idea of meeting danger of a nature so strange and new. At length the creature approached the bed; his hideous eyes were fixed on those of the Count; and, as much surprised at seeing him as Robert was at the meeting, he skipped about fifteen paces backwards at one spring, with a cry of instinctive terror, and then advanced on tiptoe, holding his torch as far forward as he could between him and the object of his fears, as if to examine him at the safest possible distance. Count Robert caught up a fragment of the bedstead, large enough to form a sort of club, with which he menaced the native of the wilds.

Apparently this poor creature's education, like education of most kinds, had not been acquired without blows, of which the recollection was as fresh as that of the lessons which they enforced. Sir Robert of Paris was a man at once to discover and to avail himself of the advantage obtained by finding that he possessed a degree of ascendency over his enemy which he had not suspected. He erected his warlike figure, assumed a step as if triumphant in the lists, and advanced threatening his

enemy with his club, as he would have menaced his antago
with the redoubtable Tranchefer. The man of the woods,
the other hand, obviously gave way, and converted his cauti
advance into a retreat no less cautious. Yet apparently
creature had not renounced some plan of resistance: he cl
tered in an angry and hostile tone, held out his torch in op
sition, and seemed about to strike the crusader with it. Co
Robert, however, determined to take his opponent at advanta
while his fears influenced him, and for this purpose resolv
if possible, to deprive him of his natural superiority in stren
and agility, which his singular form showed he could not
possess over the human species. A master of his weap
therefore, the Count menaced his savage antagonist with
stroke on the right side of his head, but suddenly averting
blow, struck him with his whole force on the left temple, a
in an instant was kneeling above him, when, drawing his dagg
he was about to deprive him of life.

The ourang-outang, ignorant of the nature of this n
weapon with which he was threatened, attempted at one a
the same moment to rise from the ground, overthrow his ant
onist, and wrench the dagger from his grasp. In the first
tempt he would probably have succeeded; and as it was,
gained his knees, and seemed likely to prevail in the strugg
when he became sensible that the knight, drawing his poni
sharply through his grasp, had cut his paw severely, and see
him aim the trenchant weapon at his throat, became probab
aware that his enemy had his life at command. He suffer
himself to be borne backwards without further resistance, w
a deep wailing and melancholy cry, having in it somethi
human, which excited compassion. He covered his eyes wi
the unwounded hand, as if he would have hid from his o
sight the death which seemed approaching him.

Count Robert, notwithstanding his military frenzy, was,
ordinary matters, a calm-tempered and mild man, and partic
larly benevolent to the lower classes of creation. The thoug
rushed through his mind, 'Why take from this unfortuna
monster the breath which is in its nostrils, after which it ca
not know another existence? And then, may it not be son
prince or knight changed to this grotesque shape, that it m
help to guard these vaults, and the wonderful adventures th
attach to them? Should I not, then, be guilty of a crime
slaying him, when he has rendered himself, rescue or no resc
which he has done as completely as his transformed figure pe

mits; and if he be actually a bestial creature, may he not have some touch of gratitude? I have heard the minstrels sing the lay of *Androcles and the Lion*. I will be on my guard with him.'

So saying, he rose from above the man of the woods, and permitted him also to arise. The creature seemed sensible of the clemency, for he muttered, in a low and supplicating tone, which seemed at once to crave for mercy and to return thanks for what he had already experienced. He wept too, as he saw the blood dropping from his wound, and with an anxious countenance, which had more of the human now that it was composed into an expression of pain and melancholy, seemed to await in terror the doom of a being more powerful than himself.

The pocket which the knight wore under his armour, capable of containing but few things, had, however, some vulnerary balsam, for which its owner had often occasion, a little lint, and a small roll of linen; these the knight took out, and motioned to the animal to hold forth his wounded hand. The man of the woods obeyed with hesitation and reluctance, and Count Robert applied the balsam and the dressings, acquainting his patient, at the same time, in a severe tone of voice, that perhaps he did wrong in putting to his use a balsam compounded for the service of the noblest knights; but that, if he saw the least sign of his making an ungrateful use of the benefit he had conferred, he would bury the dagger, of which he had felt the efficacy, to the very handle in his body.

The sylvan looked fixedly upon Count Robert almost as if he understood the language used to him, and, making one of its native murmurs, it stooped to the earth, kissed the feet of the knight, and, embracing his knees, seemed to swear to him eternal gratitude and fidelity. Accordingly, when the Count retired to the bed and assumed his armour, to await the re-opening of the trap-door, the animal sat down by his side, directing its eyes in the line with his, and seemed quietly to wait till the door should open.

After waiting about an hour, a slight noise was heard in the upper chamber, and the wild man plucked the Frank by the cloak, as if to call his attention to what was about to happen. The same voice which had before spoken, was, after a whistle or two, heard to call, 'Sylvan! Sylvan, where loiterest thou? Come instantly, or, by the rood, thou shalt abye thy sloth.'

The poor monster, as Trinculo might have called him,

seemed perfectly aware of the meaning of this threat, a showed his sense of it by pressing close to the side of Co Robert, making at the same time a kind of whining, entreati it would seem, the knight's protection. Forgetting the gr improbability there was, even in his own opinion, that creature could understand him, Count Robert said, 'Why, friend, thou hast already learned the principal court prayer this country, by which men entreat permission to speak a live. Fear nothing, poor creature — I am thy protector.'

'Sylvan, what, ho!' said the voice again; 'whom h thou got for a companion? Some of the fiends, or ghost murdered men, who they say are frequent in these dungeon Or dost thou converse with the old blind rebel Grecian? finally, is it true what men say of thee, that thou canst ta intelligibly when thou wilt, and only gibberest and chatter for fear thou art sent to work? Come, thou lazy rascal, th shalt have the advantage of the ladder to ascend by, thou thou needst it no more than a daw to ascend the steeple of t cathedral of St. Sophia.[1] Come along, then,' he said, putti a ladder down the trap-door, 'and put me not to the trouble descending to fetch thee, else, by St. Swithin, it shall be t worse for thee. Come along, therefore, like a good fellow, a for once I shall spare the whip.'

The animal, apparently, was moved by this rhetoric, f with a doleful look, which Count Robert saw by means of th nearly extinguished torch, he seemed to bid him farewell, a to creep away towards the ladder with the same excellent goo will wherewith a condemned criminal performs the like evol tion. But no sooner did the Count look angry and shake th formidable dagger than the intelligent animal seemed at on to take his resolution, and clenching his hands firmly togethe in the fashion of one who has made up his mind, he returne from the ladder's foot, and drew up behind Count Robert with the air, however, of a deserter, who feels himself bu little at home when called into the field against his ancien commander.

In a short time the warder's patience was exhausted, an despairing of the sylvan's voluntary return, he resolved t descend in quest of him. Down the ladder he came, a bundl of keys in one hand, the other assisting his descent, and a sor of dark lantern, whose bottom was so fashioned that he coul wear it upon his head like a hat. He had scarce stept on the

[1] Now the chief mosque of the Ottoman capital.

floor when he was surrounded by the nervous arms of the Count of Paris. At first the warder's idea was that he was seized by the recusant Sylvan.

'How now, villain,' he said; 'let me go, or thou shalt die the death.'

'Thou diest thyself,' said the Count, who, between the surprise and his own skill in wrestling, felt fully his advantage in the struggle.

'Treason — treason!' cried the warder, hearing by the voice that a stranger had mingled in the contest. 'Help, ho! above there! — help, Hereward — Varangian — Anglo-Saxon, or whatever accursed name thou callest thyself!'

While he spoke thus, the irresistible grasp of Count Robert seized his throat and choked his utterance. They fell heavily, the jailer undermost, upon the floor of the dungeon, and Robert of Paris, the necessity of whose case excused the action, plunged his dagger in the throat of the unfortunate. Just as he did so, a noise of armour was heard, and, rattling down the ladder, our acquaintance Hereward stood on the floor of the dungeon. The light, which had rolled from the head of the warder, continued to show him streaming with blood and in the death-grasp of a stranger. Hereward hesitated not to fly to his assistance, and, seizing upon the Count of Paris at the same advantage which that knight had gained over his own adversary a moment before, held him forcibly down with his face to the earth.

Count Robert was one of the strongest men of that military age, but then so was the Varangian; and, save that the latter had obtained a decided advantage by having his antagonist beneath him, it could not certainly have been conjectured which way the combat was to go.

'Yield, as your own jargon goes, rescue or no rescue,' said the Varangian, 'or die on the point of my dagger.'

'A French count never yields,' answered Robert, who began to conjecture with what sort of person he was engaged, 'above all to a vagabond slave like thee.' With this he made an effort to rise, so sudden, so strong, so powerful, that he had almost freed himself from the Varangian's grasp, had not Hereward, by a violent exertion of his great strength, preserved the advantage he had gained, and raised his poniard to end the strife for ever: but a loud chuckling laugh of an unearthly sound was at this instant heard. The Varangian's extended arm was seized with vigour, wh..e a rough arm,

embracing his throat, turned him over on his back, and g
the French count an opportunity of springing up.

'Death to thee, wretch!' said the Varangian, scarce know
whom he threatened; but the man of the woods appare
had an awful recollection of the prowess of human beings.
fled, therefore, swiftly up the ladder, and left Hereward
his deliverer to fight it out with what success chance mi
determine between them.

The circumstances seemed to argue a desperate comb
Both were tall, strong, and courageous, both had defens
armour, and the fatal and desperate poniard was their
offensive weapon. They paused facing each other, and
amined eagerly into their respective means of defence bef
hazarding a blow which, if it missed its attaint, would
tainly be fatally requited. During this deadly pause, a gle
shone from the trap-door above, as the wild and alarmed vis
of the man of the woods was seen peering down by the li
of a newly-kindled torch which he held as low into the dunge
as he well could.

'Fight bravely, comrade,' said Count Robert of Paris, '
we no longer battle in private, this respectable person hav
chosen to constitute himself judge of the field.'

Hazardous as his situation was, the Varangian looked
and was so struck with the wild and terrified expression wh
the creature had assumed, and the strife between curiosity a
terror which its grotesque features exhibited, that he could
help bursting into a fit of laughter.

'Sylvan is among those,' said Hereward, 'who would rath
hold the candle to a dance so formidable than join in
himself.'

'Is there, then,' said Count Robert, 'any absolute necess
that thou and I perform this dance at all?'

'None but our own pleasure,' answered Hereward, 'for I s
pect there is not between us any legitimate cause of quar
demanding to be fought out in such a place, and before such
spectator. Thou art, if I mistake not, the bold Frank w
was yesternight imprisoned in this place with a tiger, chain
within no distant spring of his bed?'

'I am,' answered the Count.

'And where is the animal who was opposed to thee?'

'He lies yonder,' answered the Count, 'never again to
the object of more terror than the deer whom he may ha
preyed on in his day.' He pointed to the body of the tig

which Hereward examined by the light of the dark lantern already mentioned.

'And this, then, was thy handiwork?' said the wondering Anglo-Saxon.

'Sooth to say it was,' answered the Count, with indifference.

'And thou hast slain my comrade of this strange watch?' said the Varangian.

'Mortally wounded him at the least,' said Count Robert.

'With your patience, I will be beholden to you for a moment's truce, while I examine his wound,' said Hereward.

'Assuredly,' answered the Count; 'blighted be the arm which strikes a foul blow at an open antagonist!'

Without demanding further security, the Varangian quitted his posture of defence and precaution, and set himself, by the assistance of the dark lantern, to examine the wound of the first warder who appeared on the field, who seemed, by his Roman military dress, to be a soldier of the bands called Immortals. He found him in the death-agony, but still able to speak.

'So, Varangian, thou art come at last, and it is to thy sloth or treachery that I am to impute my fate? Nay, answer me not. The stranger struck me over the collar-bone; had we lived long together, or met often, I had done the like by thee, to wipe out the memory of certain transactions at the Golden Gate. I know the use of the knife too well to doubt the effect of a blow aimed over the collar-bone by so strong a hand — I feel it coming. The Immortal, so called, becomes now, if priests say true, an immortal indeed, and Sebastes of Mitylene's bow is broken ere his quiver is half-emptied.'

The robber Greek sunk back in Hereward's arms, and closed his life with a groan, which was the last sound he uttered. The Varangian laid the body at length on the dungeon floor.

'This is a perplexed matter,' he said; 'I am certainly not called upon to put to death a brave man, although my national enemy, because he hath killed a miscreant who was privately meditating my own murder. Neither is this a place or a light by which to fight as becomes the champions of two nations. Let that quarrel be still for the present. How say you, then, noble sir, if we adjourn the present dispute till we effect your deliverance from the dungeons of the Blacquernal, and your restoration to your own friends and followers? If a poor Varangian should be of service to you in this matter, would you, when it was settled, refuse to meet him in a fair fight, with your national weapons or his own?'

'If,' said Count Robert, 'whether friend or enemy, thou w
extend thy assistance to my wife, who is also imprisoned som
where in this inhospitable palace, be assured that, whatever
thy rank, whatever be thy country, whatever be thy conditio
Robert of Paris will, at thy choice, proffer thee his right ha
in friendship, or raise it against thee in fair and manly batt
— a strife not of hatred, but of honor and esteem; and this
vow by the soul of Charlemagne, my ancestor, and by th
shrine of my patroness, Our Lady of the Broken Lances.'

'Enough said,' replied Hereward. 'I am as much bound
the assistance of your lady countess, being a poor exile, as
I were the first in the ranks of chivalry; for if anything ca
make the cause of worth and bravery yet more obligatory,
must be its being united with that of a helpless and sufferin
female.'

'I ought,' said Count Robert, 'to be here silent, withou
loading thy generosity with farther requests; yet thou art
man whom, if fortune has not smiled at thy birth, by ordain
ing thee to be born within the ranks of noblesse and knight
hood, yet Providence hath done thee more justice by givin
thee a more gallant heart than is always possessed, I fear, b
those who are inwoven in the gayest wreath of chivalry. Ther
lingers here in these dungeons — for I cannot say he lives —
blind old man, to whom for three years everything beyond hi
prison has been a universal blot. His food is bread and water
his intercourse limited to the conversation of a sullen warder
and if death can ever come as a deliverer, it must be to thi
dark old man. What sayst thou? Shall he, so unutterably
miserable, not profit by perhaps the only opportunity of free
dom that may ever occur to him?'

'By St. Dunstan,' answered the Varangian, 'thou keepest
over truly the oath thou hast taken as a redresser of wrongs
Thine own case is wellnigh desperate, and thou art willing to
make it utterly so by uniting with it that of every unhappy
person whom fate throws in thy way.'

'The more of human misery we attempt to relieve,' said
Robert of Paris, 'the more we shall carry with us the blessing
of our merciful saints and Our Lady of the Broken Lances, who
views with so much pain every species of human suffering or
misfortune save that which occurs within the inclosure of the
lists. But come, valiant Anglo-Saxon, resolve me on my re-
quest as speedily as thou canst. There is something in thy
face of candour as well as sense, and it is with no small con-

fidence that I desire to see us set forth in quest of my beloved countess, who, when her deliverance is once achieved, will be a powerful aid to us in recovering that of others.'

'So be it, then,' said the Varangian; 'we will proceed in quest of the Countess Brenhilda; and if, on recovering her, we find ourselves strong enough to procure the freedom of the dark old man, my cowardice, or want of compassion, shall never stop the attempt.'

CHAPTER XVII

'T is strange that, in the dark sulphureous mine,
Where wild ambition piles its ripening stores
Of slumbering thunder, Love will interpose
His tiny torch, and cause the stern explosion
To burst, when the deviser 's least aware.

Anonymous.

ABOUT noon of the same day, Agelastes met w
Achilles Tatius, the commander of the Varang
Guard, in those ruins of the Egyptian temple in wh
we formerly mentioned Hereward having had an intervi
with the philosopher. They met, as it seemed, in a v
different humour. Tatius was gloomy, melancholy, and dov
cast; while the philosopher maintained the calm indifferen
which procured for him, and in some sort deserved, the ti
of the Elephant. 'Thou blenchest, Achilles Tatius,' said t
philosopher, 'now that thou hast frankly opposed thyself to
the dangers which stood between thee and greatness. Thou
like the idle boy who turned the mill-stream upon the machi
and that done, instead of making a proper use of it, was terrifi
at seeing it in motion.'

'Thou dost me wrong, Agelastes,' answered the Acolyte
'foul wrong; I a but like the mariner, who, although dete
mined upon his age, yet cannot forbear a sorrowing glan
at the shore, be e he parts with it, it may be for ever.'

'It may ha been right to think of this, but pardon m
valiant Tatius, when I tell you the account should have be
made up before; and the grandson of Alguric the Hun ough
to have computed chances and consequences ere he stretch
his hand to his master's diadem.'

'Hush! for Heaven's sake,' said Tatius, looking roun
'that, thou knowest, is a secret between our two selves: for
Nicephorus, the Cæsar, should learn it, where were we and o
conspiracy?'

'Our bodies on the gibbet, probably,' answered Agelastes, 'and our souls divorced from them, and in the way of discovering the secrets which thou hast hitherto taken upon trust.'

'Well,' said Achilles, 'and should not the consciousness of the possibility of this fate render us cautious?'

'Cautious *men* if you will,' answered Agelastes, 'but not timid children.'

'Stone walls can hear,' said the Follower, lowering his voice. 'Dionysius the tyrant, I have read, had an ear which conveyed to him the secrets spoken within his state-prison at Syracuse.'

'And that ear is still stationary at Syracuse,' said the philosopher. 'Tell me, my most simple friend, art thou afraid it has been transported hither in one night, as the Latins believe of Our Lady's house of Loretto?'

'No,' answered Achilles, 'but in an affair so important too much caution cannot be used.'

'Well, thou most cautious of candidates for empire, and most cold of military leaders, know that the Cæsar, deeming, I think, that there is no chance of the empire falling to any one but himself, hath taken in his head to consider his succession to Alexius as a matter of course whenever the election takes place. In consequence, as matters of course are usually matters of indifference, he has left all thoughts of securing his interest upon this material occasion to thee and to me, while the foolish voluptuary hath himself run mad — for what, think you? Something between man and woman — female in her lineaments, her limbs, and a part at least of her garments; but, so help me St. George, most masculine in the rest of her attire, in her propensities, and in her exercises.'

'The amazonian wife, thou meanest,' said Achilles, 'of that iron-handed Frank, who dashed to pieces last night the golden lion of Solomon with a blow of his fist? By St. George, the least which can come of such an amour is broken bones.'

'That,' said Agelastes, 'is not quite so improbable as that Dionysius's ear should fly hither from Syracuse in a single night; but he is presumptuous in respect of the influence which his supposed good looks have gained him among the Grecian dames.'

'He was too presumptuous, I suppose,' said Achilles Tatius, 'to make a proper allowance for his situation as Cæsar and the prospect of his being emperor.'

'Meantime,' said Agelastes, 'I have promised him an interview with his Bradamante, who may perhaps reward his tender

epithets of *zoe kai psyche*[1] by divorcing his amorous soul
his unrivalled person.'

'Meantime,' said the Follower, 'thou obtainest, I con
such orders and warrants as the Cæsar can give for the fur
ance of our plot?'

'Assuredly,' said Agelastes, 'it is an opportunity not
lost. This love fit, or mad fit, has blinded him; and wit
exciting too much attention to the progress of the plot, we
thus in safety conduct matters our own way, without cau
malevolent remarks; and though I am conscious that in d
so I act somewhat at variance with my age and character,
the end being to convert a worthy follower into an imp
leader, I shame me not in procuring that interview with
lady of which the Cæsar, as they term him, is so desir
What progress, meanwhile, hast thou made with the Va
gians, who are, in respect of execution, the very arm of
design?'

'Scarce so good as I could wish,' said Achilles Tatius;
I have made sure of some two or three score of those wh
found most accessible; nor have I any doubt that, when
Cæsar is set aside, their cry will be for Achilles Tatius.'

'And what of the gallant who assisted at our prelec
said Agelastes — 'your Edward, as Alexius termed him

'I have made no impression upon him,' said the Fol
'and I am sorry for it, for he is one whom his comrade
well of, and would gladly follow. Meantime, I have
him as an additional sentinel upon the iron-witted Co
Paris, whom, both having an inveterate love of battle, he
very likely to put to death; and if it is afterwards challen
by the crusaders as a cause of war, it is only delivering up
Varangian, whose personal hatred will needs be represented
having occasioned the catastrophe. All this being prep
beforehand, how and when shall we deal with the Emperor?'

'For that,' said Agelastes, 'we must consult the C
who, although his expected happiness of to-day is not m
certain than the state preferment that he expects to morr
and although his ideas are much more anxiously fixed upo
success with this said countess than his succession to
empire, will, nevertheless, expect to be treated as the h
of the enterprise for accelerating the latter. But, to sp
my opinion, valiant Tatius, to-morrow will be the last day t
Alexius shall hold the reins of empire.'

[1] Life and soul.

'Let me know for certain,' said the Follower, 'as soon as thou canst, that I may warn our brethren, who are to have in readiness the insurgent citizens, and those of the Immortals who are combined with us, in the neighbourhood of the court, and in readiness to act; and, above all, that I may disperse upon distant guards such Varangians as I cannot trust.'

'Rely upon me,' said Agelastes, 'for the most accurate information and instructions, so soon as I have seen Nicephorus Briennius. One word permit me to ask In what manner is the wife of the Cæsar to be disposed of?'

'Somewhere,' said the Follower, 'where I can never be compelled to hear more of her history. Were it not for that nightly pest of her lectures, I could be good natured enough to take care of her destiny myself, and teach her the difference betwixt a real emperor and this Briennius, who thinks so much of himself.' So saying, they separated, the Follower elated in look and manner considerably above what he had been when they met.

Agelastes looked after his companion with a scornful laugh. 'There,' he said, 'goes a fool, whose lack of sense prevents his eyes from being dazzled by the torch which cannot fail to consume him. A half-bred, half-acting, half-thinking, half-daring caitiff, whose poorest thoughts — and those which deserve that name must be poor indeed — are not the produce of his own understanding. He expects to circumvent the fiery, haughty, and proud Nicephorus Briennius! If he does so, it will not be by his own policy, and still less by his valour. Nor shall Anna Comnena, the soul of wit and genius, be chained to such an unimaginative log as yonder half-barbarian. No; she shall have a husband of pure Grecian extraction, and well stored with that learning which was studied when Rome was great and Greece illustrious. Nor will it be the least charm of the imperial throne, that it is partaken by a partner whose personal studies have taught her to esteem and value those of the emperor.' He took a step or two with conscious elevation, and then, as conscience checked, he added, in a suppressed voice, 'But then, if Anna were destined for empress, it follows of course that Alexius must die: no consent could be trusted to. And what then? the death of an ordinary man is indifferent, when it plants on the throne a philosopher and a historian; and at what time were the possessors of the empire curious to inquire when or by whose agency their predecessors died? Diogenes — ho, Diogenes!' The slave did not imme-

diately come, so that Agelastes, wrapt in the anticipatio
his greatness, had time to add a few more words. 'Tus
must reckon with Heaven, say the priests, for many thing
I will throw this also into the account. The death of the
peror may be twenty ways achieved without my having
blame of it. The blood which we have shed may spot
hand, if closely regarded, but it shall scarce stain our forehe

Diogenes here entered.

'Has the Frank lady been removed?' said the philosop

The slave signified his assent.

'How did she bear her removal?'

'As authorised by your lordship, indifferently well. She
resented her separation from her husband, and her being
tained in the palace, and committed some violence upon
slaves of the household, several of whom were said to be sl
although we perhaps ought only to read sorely frightened.
recognised me at once, and when I told her that I came
offer her a day's retirement in your own lodgings, until
should be in your power to achieve the liberation of her h
band, she at once consented, and I deposited her in the sec
Cytherean garden-house.'

'Admirably done, my faithful Diogenes,' said the phi
opher; 'thou art like the genii who attended on the East
talismans: I have but to intimate my will to thee, and it
accomplished.'

Diogenes bowed deeply and withdrew.

'Yet remember, slave,' said Agelastes, speaking to himse
'there is danger in knowing too much; and should my ch
acter ever become questioned, too many of my secrets are
the power of Diogenes.'

At this moment a blow thrice repeated, and struck up
one of the images without, which had been so framed as
return a tingling sound, and in so far deserved the praise
being vocal, interrupted his soliloquy.

'There knocks,' said he, 'one of our allies; who can it
that comes so late?' He touched the figure of Isis with h
staff, and the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius entered in the f
Grecian habit, and that graceful dress anxiously arranged
the best advantage. 'Let me hope, my lord,' said Agelast
receiving the Cæsar with an apparently grave and reserv
face, 'your Highness comes to tell me that your sentimen
are changed on reflection, and that whatever you had to con
about with this Frankish lady may be at least deferred un

the principal part of our conspiracy has been successfully executed.'

'Philosopher,' answered the Cæsar, 'no. My resolution, once taken, is not the sport of circumstances. Believe me, that I have not finished so many labours without being ready to undertake others. The favour of Venus is the reward of the labours of Mars, nor would I think it worth while to worship the god armipotent with the toil and risk attending his service, unless I had previously attained some decided proofs that I was wreathed with the myrtle, intimating the favour of his beautiful mistress.'

'I beg pardon for my boldness,' said Agelastes; 'but has your Imperial Highness reflected that you were wagering, with the wildest rashness, an empire, including thine own life, mine, and all who are joined with us in a hardy scheme? And against what were they waged? Against the very precarious favour of a woman, who is altogether divided betwixt fiend and female, and in either capacity is most likely to be fatal to our present scheme, either by her good will or by the offence which she may take. If she prove such as you wish, she will desire to keep her lover by her side, and to spare him the danger of engaging in a perilous conspiracy; and if she remains, as the world believe her, constant to her husband, and to the sentiments she vowed to him at the altar, you may guess what cause of offence you are likely to give, by urging a suit which she has already received so very ill.'

'Pshaw, old man! Thou turnest a dotard, and in the great knowledge thou possessest of other things, hast forgotten the knowledge best worth knowing — that of the beautiful part of the creation. Think of the impression likely to be made by a gallant, neither ignoble in situation nor unacceptable in presence, upon a lady who must fear the consequences of refusal. Come, Agelastes, let me have no more of thy croaking, augurring bad fortune like the raven from the blasted oak on the left hand; but declaim, as well thou canst, how faint heart never won fair lady, and how those best deserve empire who can wreathe the myrtles of Venus with the laurels of Mars. Come, man, undo me the secret entrance which combines these magical ruins with groves that are fashioned rather like those of Cytheros or Naxos.'

'It must be as you will,' said the philosopher, with a deep and somewhat affected sigh.

'Here, Diogenes!' called aloud the Cæsar; 'when thou art

summoned, mischief is not far distant. Come, undo the sec entrance. Mischief, my trusty negro, is not so distant but s will answer the first clatter of the stones.'

The negro looked at his master, who returned him a glan acquiescing in the Cæsar's proposal. Diogenes then went to part of the ruined wall which was covered by some climbi shrubs, all of which he carefully removed. This showed a litt postern door, closed irregularly, and filled up, from the thresho to the top, with large square stones, all of which the slave to out and piled aside, as if for the purpose of replacing the 'I leave thee,' said Agelastes to the negro, 'to guard this do and let no one enter, except he has the sign, upon the peril thy life. It were dangerous it should be left open at this perio of the day.'

The obsequious Diogenes put his hand to his sabre and his head, as if to signify the usual promise of fidelity or deat by which those of his condition generally expressed the answer to their master's commands. Diogenes then lighted small lantern, and, pulling out a key, opened an inner door wood, and prepared to step forward.

'Hold, friend Diogenes,' said the Cæsar; 'thou wantest no thy lantern to discern an honest man, whom, if thou didst see I must needs say thou hast come to the wrong place to fin one. Nail thou up these creeping shrubs before the entranc of the place, and abide thou there, as already directed, till ou return, to parry the curiosity of any who may be attracted b the sight of the private passage.'

The black slave drew back as he gave the lamp to th Cæsar, and Agelastes followed the light through a long, bu narrow, arched passage, well supplied with air from space t space, and not neglected in the inside to the degree which it exterior would have implied.

'I will not enter with you into the gardens,' said Agelastes 'or to the bower of Cytherea, where I am too old to be a wor shipper. Thou thyself, I think, Imperial Cæsar, art well awar of the road, having travelled it divers times, and, if I mistak not, for the fairest reasons.'

'The more thanks,' said the Cæsar, 'are due to mine excel lent friend Agelastes, who forgets his own age to accommodat the youth of his friends.'

CHAPTER XVIII

WE must now return to the dungeon of the Blacquernal, where circumstances had formed at least a temporary union between the stout Varangian and Count Robert of Paris, who had a stronger resemblance to each other in their dispositions than probably either of them would have been willing to admit. The virtues of the Varangian were all of that natural and unrefined kind which nature herself dictates to a gallant man, to whom a total want of fear, and the most prompt alacrity to meet danger, had been attributes of a life-long standing. The count, on the other hand, had all that bravery, generosity, and love of adventure which was possessed by the rude soldier, with the virtues, partly real, partly fantastic, which those of his rank and country acquired from the spirit of chivalry. The one might be compared to the diamond as it came from the mine, before it had yet received the advantages of cutting and setting; the other was the ornamented gem, which, cut into facets and richly set, had lost perhaps a little of its original substance, yet still, at the same time, to the eye of an inspector, had something more showy and splendid than when it was, according to the phrase of lapidaries, *en brut*. In the one case, the value was more artificial; in the other, it was the more natural and real of the two. Chance, therefore, had made a temporary alliance between two men the foundation of whose characters bore such strong resemblance to each other that they were only separated by a course of education, which had left rigid prejudices on both sides, and which prejudices were not unlikely to run counter to each other. The Varangian commenced his conversation with the Count in a tone of familiarity, approaching nearer to rudeness than the speaker was aware of, and much of which, though most innocently intended by Hereward, might be taken amiss by his new brother-in-arms. The most offensive part of his deportment, however, was a blunt, bold disregard to the title of

those whom he addressed, adhering thereby to the manners
the Saxons, from whom he drew his descent, and which
likely to be at least unpleasing to the Franks as well
Normans, who had already received and become very te
cious of the privileges of the feudal system, the mummery
heraldry, and the warlike claims assumed by knights,
belonging only to their own order.

Hereward was apt, it must be owned, to think too little
these distinctions; while he had at least a sufficient tenden
to think enough of the power and wealth of the Greek emp
which he served, of the dignity inherent in Alexius Comnen
and which he was also disposed to grant to the Grecian office
who, under the Emperor, commanded his own corps, and pa
ticularly to Achilles Tatius. This man Hereward knew to
a coward, and half-suspected to be a villain. Still, howeve
the Follower was always the direct channel through which th
imperial graces were conferred on the Varangians in general,
well as upon Hereward himself; and he had always the polic
to represent such favours as being more or less indirectly th
consequence of his own intercession. He was supposed vigo
ously to espouse the quarrel of the Varangians, in all the di
putes between them and the other corps; he was liberal an
open-handed; gave every soldier his due; and, bating th
trifling circumstance of valour, which was not particularly h
forte, it would have been difficult for these strangers to hav
demanded a leader more to their wishes. Besides this, ou
friend Hereward was admitted by him into his society, attende
him, as we have seen, upon secret expeditions, and shared
therefore, deeply in what may be termed by an expressive
though vulgar, phrase the sneaking kindness entertained fo
this new Achilles by the greater part of his myrmidons.

Their attachment might be explained, perhaps, as a liking
to their commander as strong as could well exist with
marvellous lack of honour and esteem. The scheme, therefore
formed by Hereward to effect the deliverance of the Count o
Paris comprehended as much faith to the Emperor and his
representative, the Acolyte or Follower, as was consistent with
rendering justice to the injured Frank.

In furtherance of this plan, he conducted Count Robert from
the subterranean vaults of the Blacquernal, of the intricacies
of which he was master, having been repeatedly of late
stationed sentinel there, for the purpose of acquiring that
knowledge of which Tatius promised himself the advantage in

the ensuing conspiracy. When they were in the open air, and at some distance from the gloomy towers of the palace, he bluntly asked the Count of Paris whether he knew Agelastes the Philosopher. The other answered in the negative.

'Look you now, sir knight, you hurt yourself in attempting to impose upon me,' said Hereward. 'You must know him; for I saw you dined with him yesterday.'

'O! with that learned old man?' said the Count. 'I know nothing of him worth owning or disguising to thee or any one. A wily person he is, half herald and half minstrel.'

'Half procurer and whole knave,' subjoined the Varangian. 'With the mask of apparent good-humour, he conceals his pandering to the vices of others; with the specious jargon of philosophy, he has argued himself out of religious belief and moral principle; and, with the appearance of the most devoted loyalty, he will, if he is not checked in time, either argue his too confiding master out of life and empire, or, if he fails in this, reason his simple associates into death and misery.'

'And do you know all this,' said Count Robert, 'and permit this man to go unimpeached?'

'O, content you, sir,' replied the Varangian; 'I cannot yet form any plot which Agelastes may not countermine; but the time will come, nay, it is already approaching, when the Emperor's attention shall be irresistibly turned to the conduct of this man, and then let the philosopher sit fast, or by St. Dunstan the barbarian overthrows him! I would only fain, methinks, save from his clutches a foolish friend, who has listened to his delusions.'

'But what have I to do,' said the Count, 'with this man or with his plots?'

'Much,' said Hereward, 'although you know it not. The main supporter of this plot is no other than the Cæsar, who ought to be the most faithful of men; but ever since Alexius has named a Sebastocrator, an officer that is higher in rank, and nearer to the throne, than the Cæsar himself, so long has Nicephorus Briennius been displeased and dissatisfied, though for what length of time he has joined the schemes of the astucious Agelastes it is more difficult to say. This is I know, that for many months he has fed liberally, as his riches enable him to do, the vices and prodigality of the Cæsar. He has encouraged him to show disrespect to his wife, although the Emperor's daughter; has put ill-will between him and the royal family. And if Briennius bears no longer the fame of a

rational man and the renown of a good leader, he is depri
of both by following the advice of this artful sycophant.'

'And what is all this to me?' said the Frank. 'Agela
may be a true man or a time-serving slave; his master, Ale
Comnenus, is not so much allied to me or mine that I sh
meddle in the intrigues of his court?'

'You may be mistaken in that,' said the blunt Varangi
'if these intrigues involve the happiness and virtue——'

'Death of a thousand martyrs!' said the Frank, 'doth pa
intrigues and quarrels of slaves involve a single thought
suspicion of the noble Countess of Paris? The oaths of
whole generation were ineffectual to prove but that one of
hairs had changed its colour to silver.'

'Well imagined, gallant knight,' said the Anglo Saxon; 't
art a husband fitted for the atmosphere of Constantinople, wh
calls for little vigilance and a strong belief. Thou wilt
many followers and fellows in this court of ours.'

'Hark thee, friend,' replied the Frank, 'let us have no m
words, nor walk farther together than just to the most solit
nook of this bewildered city, and let us there set to that w
which we left even now unfinished.'

'If thou wert a duke, sir count,' replied the Varangi
'thou couldst not invite to a combat one who is more ready
it. Yet consider the odds on which we fight. If I fall,
moan is soon made; but will my death set thy wife at libe
if she is under restraint, or restore her honour if it is tarnish
Will it do anything more than remove from the world the o
person who is willing to give thee aid, at his own risk a
danger, and who hopes to unite thee to thy wife, and repl
thee at the head of thy forces?'

'I was wrong,' said the Count of Paris — 'I was entir
wrong; but beware, my good friend, how thou couplest
name of Brenhilda of Aspramonte with the word of dishono
and tell me, instead of this irritating discourse, whither go
now?'

'To the Cytherean gardens of Agelastes, from which we
not far distant,' said the Anglo-Saxon; 'yet he hath a nea
way to it than that by which we now travel, else I should
at a loss to account for the short space in which he could
change the charms of his garden for the gloomy ruins of t
Temple of Isis and the Imperial Palace of the Blacquerna!'

'And wherefore, and how long,' said Count Robert, 'd
thou conclude that my countess is detained in these gardens

'Ever since yesterday,' replied Hereward. 'When both I and several of my companions, at my request, kept close watch upon the Cæsar and your lady, we did plainly perceive passages of fiery admiration on his part, and anger, as it seemed, on hers, which Agelastes, being Nicephorus's friend, was likely, as usual, to bring to an end by a separation of you both from the army of the crusaders, that your wife, like many a matron before, might have the pleasure of taking up her residence in the gardens of that worthy sage; while you, my lord, might take up your own permanently in the castle of Blacquernal.'

'Villain! why didst thou not apprise me of this yesterday?'

'A likely thing,' said Hereward, 'that I should feel myself at liberty to leave the ranks and make such a communication to a man whom, far from a friend, I then considered in the light of a personal enemy! Methinks that, instead of such language as this, you should be thankful that so many chance circumstances have at length brought me to befriend and assist you.'

Count Robert felt the truth of what was said, though at the same time his fiery temper longed to avenge itself, according to its wont, upon the party which was nearest at hand.

But now they arrived at what the citizens of Constantinople called the Philosopher's Gardens. Here Hereward hoped to obtain entrance, for he had gained a knowledge of some part, at least, of the private signals of Achilles and Agelastes, since he had been introduced to the last at the ruins of the Temple of Isis. They had not indeed admitted him to their entire secret; yet, confident in his connexion with the Follower, they had no hesitation in communicating to him snatches of knowledge such as, committed to a man of shrewd natural sense like the Anglo-Saxon, could scarce fail, in time and by degrees, to make him master of the whole. Count Robert and his companion stood before an arched door, the only opening in a high wall, and the Anglo-Saxon was about to knock, when, as if the idea had suddenly struck him

'What if the wretch Diogenes opens the gate? We must kill him ere he can fly back and betray us. Well, it is a matter of necessity, and the villain has deserved his death by a hundred horrid crimes.'

'Kill him then, thyself,' retorted Count Robert; 'he is nearer thy degree, and assuredly I will not defile the name of Charlemagne with the blood of a black slave.'

'Nay, God-a-mercy!' answered the Anglo-Saxon, 'h
must bestir yourself in the action supposing there come
and that I be overborne by odds.'

'Such odds,' said the knight, 'will render the actio
like a *mêlée*, or general battle; and assure yourself I w
be slack when I may, with my honour, be active.'

'I doubt it not,' said the Varangian; 'but the disti
seems a strange one, that, before permitting a man to
himself or annoy his enemy, requires him to demand the
gree of his ancestor.'

'Fear you not, sir,' said Count Robert. 'The strict r
chivalry indeed bears what I tell thee, but when the qu
is, Fight or not? there is great allowance to be made
decision in the affirmative.'

'Let me give, then, the exorciser's rap,' replied Here
'and see what fiend will appear.'

So saying, he knocked in a particular manner, and the
opened inwards; a dwarfish negress stood in the gap, her
hair contrasted singularly with her dark complexion, and
the broad, laughing look peculiar to these slaves. She
something in her physiognomy which, severely construed, m
argue malice and a delight in human misery.

'Is Agelastes ——' said the Varangian; but he had not
pleted the sentence when she answered him by pointing
a shadowed walk.

The Anglo-Saxon and Frank turned in that direction,
the hag rather muttered than said distinctly, 'You are o
the initiated, Varangian; take heed whom you take with
when you may hardly, peradventure, be welcomed even
alone.'

Hereward made a sign that he understood her, and
were instantly out of her sight. The path winded beauti
through the shades of an Eastern garden, where clump
flowers and labyrinths of flowering shrubs, and the tall bo
of the forest trees, rendered even the breath of noon cool
acceptable.

'Here we must use our utmost caution,' said Herew
speaking in a low tone of voice; 'for here it is most likely
deer that we seek has found its refuge. Better allow me
pass before, since you are too deeply agitated to possess
coolness necessary for a scout. Keep concealed beneath
oak, and let no vain scruples of honour deter you from creep
beneath the underwood, or beneath the earth itself, if

should hear a footfall. If the lovers have agreed, Agelastes, it is probable, walks his round, to prevent intrusion.'

'Death and furies, it cannot be!' exclaimed the fiery Frank. 'Lady of the Broken Lances, take thy votary's life ere thou torment him with this agony.'

He saw, however, the necessity of keeping a strong force upon himself, and permitted, without further remonstrance, the Varangian to pursue his way, looking, however, earnestly after him. By advancing forward a little, he could observe Hereward draw near to a pavilion which arose at no great distance from the place where they had parted. Here he observed him apply first his eye and then his ear to one of the casements, which were in a great measure grown over and excluded from the light by various flowering shrubs. He almost thought he saw a grave interest take place in the countenance of the Varangian, and he longed to have his share of the information which he had doubtless obtained.

He crept, therefore, with noiseless steps, through the same labyrinth of foliage which had covered the approaches of Hereward; and so silent were his movements, that he touched the Anglo-Saxon, in order to make him aware of his presence, before he observed his approach.

Hereward, not aware at first by whom he was approached, turned on the intruder with a countenance like a burning coal. Seeing, however, that it was the Frank, he shrugged his shoulders, as if pitying the impatience which could not be kept under prudent restraint, and, drawing himself back, allowed the Count the privilege of a peeping-place through plinths of the casement, which could not be decerned by the sharpest eye from the inner side. The sombre character of the light which penetrated into this abode of pleasure was suited to that species of thought to which a temple of Cytherea was supposed to be dedicated. Portraits and groups of statuary were also to be seen, in the taste of those which they had beheld at the kiosk of the waterfall, yet something more free in the ideas which they conveyed than were to be found at their first resting-place. Shortly after, the door of the pavilion opened, and the Countess entered, followed by her attendant Agatha. The lady threw herself on a couch as she came in, while her attendant, who was a young and very handsome woman, kept herself modestly in the background, so much so as hardly to be distinguished.

'What dost thou think,' said the Countess, 'of so suspicious

a friend as Agelastes, so gallant an enemy as the Cæsar, is called?'

'What should I think,' returned the damsel, 'excep what the old man calls friendship is hatred, and wh Cæsar terms a patriotic love for his country, which wi permit him to set its enemies at liberty, is in fact too an affection for his fair captive?'

'For such an affection,' said the Countess, 'he shall ha same requital as if it were indeed the hostility of whi would give it the colour. My true and noble lord, hadst an idea of the calamities to which they have subjected me soon wouldst thou break through every restraint to hast my relief!'

'Art thou a man,' said Count Robert to his compe 'and canst thou advise me to remain still and hear this?'

'I am one man,' said the Anglo-Saxon, 'you, sir, ar other; but all our arithmetic will not make us more than and in this place it is probable that a whistle from the C or a scream from Agelastes, would bring a thousand to u us, if we were as bold as Bevis of Hampton. Stand still keep quiet. I counsel this less as respecting my own which, by embarking upon a wildgoose chase with so stra partner, I have shown I put at little value, than for thy s and that of the lady thy countess, who shows herself as virt as beautiful.'

'I was imposed on at first,' said the Lady Brenhilda t attendant. 'Affectation of severe morals, of deep learning of rigid rectitude, assumed by this wicked old man, made believe in part the character which he pretended; but gloss is rubbed off since he let me see into his alliance wit unworthy Cæsar, and the ugly picture remains in its n loathsomeness. Nevertheless, if I can, by address or subt deceive this arch-deceiver — as he has taken from me, in a measure, every other kind of assistance — I will not refuse of craft, which he may find perhaps equal to his own!'

'Hear you that?' said the Varangian to the Count of P 'Do not let your impatience mar the web of your lady's dence. I will weigh a woman's wit against a man's valour w there is aught to do. Let us not come in with our assist until time shall show us that it is necessary for her safety our success.'

'Amen,' said the Count of Paris; 'but hope not, sir Sa that thy prudence shall persuade me to leave this garden w

out taking full vengeance on that unworthy Cæsar, And the pretended philosopher, if indeed he turns out to have assumed a character ——' The Count was here beginning to raise his voice, when the Saxon, without ceremony, placed his hand on his mouth. 'Thou takest a liberty,' said Count Robert, lowering, however, his tones.

'Ay, truly,' said Hereward; 'when the house is on fire, I do not stop to ask whether the water which I pour on it be perfumed or no.'

This recalled the Frank to a sense of his situation; and if not contented with the Saxon's mode of making an apology, he was at least silenced. A distant noise was now heard; the Countess listened, and changed colour. 'Agatha,' she said, 'we are like champions in the lists, and here comes the adversary. Let us retreat into this side apartment, and so for a while put off an encounter thus alarming.' So saying, the two females withdrew into a sort of ante-room, which opened from the principal apartment behind the seat which Brenhilda had occupied.

They had scarcely disappeared, when, as the stage direction has it, enter from the other side the Cæsar and Agelastes. They had perhaps heard the last words of Brenhilda, for the Cæsar repeated in a low tone —

'Militat omnis amans, habet et sua castra Cupido.

What, has our fair opponent withdrawn her forces? No matter, it shows she thinks of the warfare, though the enemy be not in sight. Well, thou shalt not have to upbraid me this time, Agelastes, with precipitating my amours, and depriving myself of the pleasure of pursuit. By Heavens, I will be as regular in my progress as if in reality I bore on my shoulders the whole load of years which make the difference between us; for I shrewdly suspect that with thee, old man, it is that envious churl Time that hath plucked the wings of Cupid.'

'Say not so, mighty Cæsar,' said the old man; 'it is the hand of Prudence, which, depriving Cupid's wing of some wild feathers, leaves him still enough to fly with an equal and steady flight.'

'Thy flight, however, was less measured, Agelastes, when thou didst collect that armoury — that magazine of Cupid's panoply, out of which thy kindness permitted me but now to arm myself, or rather to repair my accoutrements.'

So saying, he glanced his eye over his own person, blazing with gems, and adorned with a chain of gold, bracelets, rings,

and other ornaments, which, with a new and splendid
assumed since his arrival at these Cytherean gardens, ten
set off his very handsome figure.

'I am glad,' said Agelastes, 'if you have found among
which I now never wear, and seldom made use of even
life was young with me, anything which may set off
natural advantages. Remember only this slight con
that such of these trifles as have made part of your w
apparel on this distinguished day cannot return to a n
owner, but must of necessity remain the property of
greatness of which they had once formed the ornament

'I cannot consent to this, my worthy friend,' said the C
'I know thou valuest these jewels only in so far as a p
opher may value them — that is, for nothing save the re
brances which attach to them. This large seal-ring, for ins
was, I have heard you say, the property of Socrates;
you cannot view it save with devout thankfulness that
own philosophy has never been tried with the exercise
Xantippe. These clasps released, in older times, the
bosom of Phryne; and they now belong to one who cou
better homage to the beauties they concealed or disco
than could the cynic Diogenes. These buckles, too —

'I will spare thy ingenuity, good youth,' said Agel
somewhat nettled — 'or rather, noble Cæsar. Keep thy
thou wilt have ample occasion for it.'

'Fear not me,' said the Cæsar. 'Let us proceed,
you will, to exercise the gifts which we possess, such as
are, either natural or bequeathed to us by our dear an
spected friend. Hah!' he said, the door opening sud
and the Countess almost meeting him, 'our wishes are
anticipated.'

He bowed accordingly with the deepest deference to
Lady Brenhilda, who, having made some alterations to enh
the splendour of her attire, now moved forward from
withdrawing-room into which she had retreated.

'Hail, noble lady,' said the Cæsar, 'whom I have vi
with the intention of apologising for detaining you, in
degree against your will, in those strange regions in which
unexpectedly find yourself.'

'Not in some degree,' answered the lady, 'but entirely
trary to my inclinations, which are, to be with my husband
Count of Paris, and the followers who have taken the
under his banner.'

'Such, doubtless, were your thoughts when you left the land of the West,' said Agelastes; 'but, fair countess, have they experienced no change? You have left a shore streaming with human blood when the slightest provocation occurred, and thou hast come to one whose principal maxim is to increase the sum of human happiness by every mode which can be invented. In the West yonder, he or she is respected most who can best exercise their tyrannical strength in making others miserable, while in those more placid realms we reserve our garlands for the ingenious youth or lovely lady who can best make happy the person whose affection is fixed upon her.'

'But, reverend philosopher,' said the Countess, 'who labourest so artificially in recommending the yoke of pleasure, know that you contradict every notion which I have been taught from my infancy. In the land where my nurture lay, so far are we from acknowledging your doctrines, that we match not except, like the lion and the lioness, when the male has compelled the female to acknowledge his superior worth and valour. Such is our rule, that a damsel, even of mean degree, would think herself heinously undermatched if wedded to a gallant whose fame in arms was yet unknown.'

'But, noble lady,' said the Caesar, 'a dying man may then find room for some faint hope. Were there but a chance that distinction in arms could gain those affections which have been stolen, rather than fairly conferred, how many are there who would willingly enter into the competition where the prize is so fair! What is the enterprise too bold to be undertaken on such a condition? And where is the individual whose heart would not feel that, in baring his sword for the prize, he made vow never to return it to the scabbard without the proud boast, "What I have not yet won, I have deserved"?'

'You see, lady,' said Agelastes, who, apprehending that the last speech of the Caesar had made some impression, hastened to follow it up with a suitable observation — 'you see that the fire of chivalry burns as gallantly in the bosom of the Grecians as in that of the Western nations.'

'Yes,' answered Brenhilda, 'and I have heard of the celebrated siege of Troy, on which occasion a dastardly coward carried off the wife of a brave man, shunned every proffer of encounter with the husband whom he had wronged, and finally caused the death of his numerous brothers, the destruction of his native city, with all the wealth which it contained, and died himself the death of a pitiful poltroon, lamented only by his

worthless leman, to show how well the rules of chivalry
understood by your predecessors.'

'Lady, you mistake,' said the Cæsar; 'the offences of
were those of a dissolute Asiatic; the courage which ave
them was that of the Greek empire.'

'You are learned, sir,' said the lady; 'but think not th
will trust your words until you produce before me a Gre
knight gallant enough to look upon the armed crest of
husband without quaking.'

'That, methinks, were not extremely difficult,' returned
Cæsar: 'if they have not flattered me, I have myself
thought equal in battle to more dangerous men than him
has been strangely mated with the Lady Brenhilda.'

'That is soon tried,' answered the Countess. 'You
hardly, I think, deny that my husband, separated from me
some unworthy trick, is still at thy command, and could
produced at thy pleasure. I will ask no armour for him
what he wears, no weapon but his good sword Tranchefer; t
place him in this chamber, or any other lists equally narr
and if he flinch, or cry craven, or remain dead under shield
Brenhilda be the prize of the conqueror. Merciful Heave
she concluded, as she sunk back upon her seat, 'forgive me
the crime of even imagining such a termination, which is e
almost to doubting Thine unerring judgment.'

'Let me, however,' said the Cæsar, 'catch up these preci
words before they fall to the ground. Let me hope that h
whom the Heavens shall give power and strength to conq
this highly-esteemed Count of Paris shall succeed him in
affections of Brenhilda; and believe me, the sun plunges
through the sky to his resting place with the same celer
that I shall hasten to the encounter.'

'Now, by Heaven!' said Count Robert, in an anxi
whisper to Hereward, 'it is too much to expect me to stand
and hear a contemptible Greek, who durst not stand even
rattling farewell which Tranchefer takes of his scabbard, bra
me in my absence, and affect to make love to my lady
amours. And she, too — methinks Brenhilda allows me
license than she is wont to do to yonder chattering popinj
By the rood! I will spring into the apartment, front them w
my personal appearance, and confute yonder braggart in
manner he is like to remember.'

'Under favour,' said the Varangian, who was the o
auditor of this violent speech, 'you shall be ruled by ca

reason while I am with you. When we are separated, let the devil of knight-errantry, which has such possession of thee, take thee upon his shoulders and carry thee full tilt wheresoever he lists.'

'Thou art a brute,' said the Count, looking at him with a contempt corresponding to the expression he made use of; 'not only without humanity, but without the sense of natural honour or natural shame. The most despicable of animals stands not by tamely and sees another assail his mate. The bull offers his horns to a rival, the mastiff uses his jaws, and even the timid stag becomes furious and gores.'

'Because they are beasts,' said the Varangian, 'and their mistresses also creatures without shame or reason, who are not aware of the sanctity of a choice. But thou, too, Count, canst thou not see the obvious purpose of this poor lady, forsaken by all the world, to keep her faith towards thee, by eluding the snares with which wicked men have beset her? By the souls of my fathers! my heart is so much moved by her ingenuity, mingled as I see it is with the most perfect candour and faith, that I myself, in fault of a better champion, would willingly raise the axe in her behalf.'

'I thank thee, my good friend,' said the Count — 'I thank thee as heartily as if it were possible thou shouldst be left to do that good office for Brenhilda, the beloved of many a noble lord, the mistress of many a powerful vassal; and, what is more – much more than thanks, I crave thy pardon for the wrong I did thee but now.'

'My pardon you cannot need,' said the Varangian; 'for I take no offence that is not seriously meant. Stay, they speak again.'

'It is strange it should be so,' said the Cæsar, as he paced the apartment; 'but methinks, nay, I am almost certain, Agelastes, that I hear voices in the vicinity of this apartment of thy privacy.'

'It is impossible,' said Agelastes; 'but I will go and see.'

Perceiving him to leave the pavilion, the Varangian made the Frank sensible that they must crouch down among a little thicket of evergreens, where they lay completely obscured. The philosopher made his rounds with a heavy step but a watchful eye: and the two listeners were obliged to observe the strictest silence, without motion of any kind, until he had completed an ineffectual search, and returned into the pavilion.

'By my faith, brave man,' said the Count, 'ere we return to

our skulking-place, I must tell thee in thine ear that ne
my life was temptation so strong upon me as that
prompted me to beat out that old hypocrite's brains, pro
I could have reconciled it with my honour; and heartily
wish that thou, whose honour no way withheld thee, ha
perienced and given way to some impulse of a similar natu

'Such fancies have passed through my head,' said the V
gian; 'but I will not follow them till they are consistent
with our own safety and more particularly with that o
Countess.'

'I thank thee again for thy good-will to her,' said
Robert; 'and, by Heaven! if fight we must at length,
seems likely, I will neither grudge thee an honourable an
nist nor fair quarter if the combat goes against thee.'

'Thou hast my thanks,' was the reply of Hereward; '
for Heaven's sake, be silent in this conjuncture, and do
thou wilt afterwards.'

Before the Varangian and the Count had again resu
their posture of listeners, the parties within the pavilion,
ceiving themselves unwatched, had resumed their conversa
speaking low, yet with considerable animation.

'It is in vain you would persuade me,' said the Coun
'that you know not where my husband is, or that you
not the most absolute influence over his captivity. Who
could have an interest in banishing or putting to death
husband but he that affects to admire the wife?'

'You do me wrong, beautiful lady,' answered the Ca
'and forget that I can in no shape be termed the movi
spring of this empire; that my father-in-law, Alexius, is
Emperor; and that the woman who terms herself my wif
jealous as a fiend can be of my slightest motion. What
sibility was there that I should work the captivity of y
husband and your own? The open affront which the Count
Paris put upon the Emperor was one which he was likely
avenge, either by secret guile or by open force. Me it no
touched, save as the humble vassal of thy charms; and it
by the wisdom and the art of the sage, Agelastes, that I
able to extricate thee from the gulf in which thou hadst
certainly perished. Nay, weep not, lady, for as yet we kn
not the fate of Count Robert; but, credit me, it is wisdom
choose a better protector, and consider him as no more.'

'A better than him,' said Brenhilda, 'I can never ha
were I to choose out of the knighthood of all the world.'

'This hand,' said the Cæsar, drawing himself into a martial attitude, 'should decide that question, were the man of whom thou thinkest so much yet moving on the face of this earth, and at liberty.'

'Thou art,' said Brenhilda, looking fixedly at him, with the fire of indignation flashing from every feature — 'thou art — but it avails not telling thee what is thy real name; believe me, the world shall one day ring with it, and be justly sensible of its value. Observe what I am about to say. Robert of Paris is gone, or captive, I know not where. He cannot fight the match of which thou seemest so desirous; but here stands Brenhilda, born heiress of Aspramonte, by marriage the wedded wife of the good Count of Paris. She was never matched in the lists by mortal man except the valiant Count, and since thou art so grieved that thou canst not meet her husband in battle, thou canst not surely object if she is willing to meet thee in his stead?'

'How, madam!' said the Cæsar, astonished; 'do you propose yourself to hold the lists against me?'

'Against you!' said the Countess — 'against all the Grecian empire, if they shall affirm that Robert of Paris is justly used and lawfully confined.'

'And are the conditions,' said the Cæsar, 'the same as if Count Robert himself held the lists? The vanquished must then be at the pleasure of the conqueror for good or evil.'

'It would seem so,' said the Countess, 'nor do I refuse the hazard; only that, if the other champion shall bite the dust, the noble Count Robert shall be set at liberty and permitted to depart with all suitable honours.'

'This I refuse not,' said the Cæsar, 'provided it is in my power.'

A deep growling sound, like that of a modern gong, here interrupted the conference.

CHAPTER XIX

THE Varangian and Count Robert, at every risk of d
covery, had remained so near as fully to conjectu
though they could not expressly overhear, the purpo
of the conversation.

'He has accepted her challenge?' said the Count of Paris.

'And with apparent willingness,' said Hereward.

'O, doubtless — doubtless,' answered the crusader; 'but
knows not the skill in war which a woman may attain; for m
part, God knows I have enough depending upon the issue
this contest, yet such is my confidence, that I would to G
I had more. I vow to Our Lady of the Broken Lances that
desire every furrow of land I possess, every honour which I ca
call my own, from the countship of Paris down to the leath
that binds my spur, were dependent and at issue upon this fa
field between your Cæsar, as men term him, and Brenhilda
Aspramonte.'

'It is a noble confidence,' said the Varangian, 'nor dur
I say it is a rash one; only I cannot but remember that th
Cæsar is a strong man as well as a handsome, expert in the us
of arms, and, above all, less strictly bound than you esteem
yourself by the rules of honour. There are many ways i
which advantage may be given and taken, which will not, i
the Cæsar's estimation, alter the character of the field from a
equal one, although it might do so in the opinion of the chival
rous Count of Paris, or even in that of the poor Varangian
But first let me conduct you to some place of safety, for you
escape must be soon, if it is not already, detected. The sound
which we heard intimate that some of his confederate plotter
have visited the garden on other than love affairs. I will guid
thee to another avenue than that by which we entered. Bu
you would hardly, I suppose, be pleased to adopt the wises
alternative?'

'And what may that be?' said the Count.

'To give thy purse, though it were thine all, to some poor ferryman to waft thee over the Hellespont, then hasten to carry thy complaint to Godfrey of Bouillon, and what friends thou mayst have among thy brethren crusaders, and determine, as thou easily canst, on a sufficient number of them to come back and menace the city with instant war, unless the Emperor should deliver up thy lady, most unfairly made prisoner, and prevent, by his authority, this absurd and unnatural combat.'

'And would you have me, then,' said Count Robert, 'move the crusaders to break a fairly appointed field of battle? Do you think that Godfrey of Bouillon would turn back upon his pilgrimage for such an unworthy purpose; or that the Countess of Paris would accept as a service means of safety which would stain her honour for ever, by breaking an appointment solemnly made on her own challenge? Never.'

'My judgment is then at fault,' said the Varangian, 'for I see I can hammer out no expedient which is not, in some extravagant manner or another, controlled by your foolish notions. Here is a man who has been trapped into the power of his enemy, that he might not interfere to prevent a base stratagem upon his lady, involving both her life and honour; yet he thinks it a matter of necessity that he keeps faith as precisely with these midnight poisoners as he would had it been pledged to the most honourable men!'

'Thou say'st a painful truth,' said Count Robert; 'but my word is the emblem of my faith; and if I pass it to a dishonourable or faithless foe, it is imprudently done on my part; but if I break it, being once pledged, it is a dishonourable action, and the disgrace can never be washed from my shield.'

'Do you mean, then,' said the Varangian, 'to suffer your wife's honour to remain pledged as it at present is on the event of an unequal combat?'

'God and the saints pardon thee such a thought!' said the Count of Paris. 'I will go to see this combat with a heart as firm, if not as light, as any time I ever saw spears splintered. If by the influence of any accident or treachery — for fairly, and with such an antagonist, Brenhilda of Aspramonte cannot be overthrown — I step into the lists, proclaim the Cæsar as he is — a villain, show the falsehood of his conduct from beginning to end, appeal to every noble heart that hears me, and then — God show the right!'

Hereward paused, and shook his head. 'All this,' he said,

'might be feasible enough, provided the combat were to b
fought in the presence of your own countrymen, or even, b
the mass! if the Varangians were to be guards of the list
But treachery of every kind is so familiar to the Greeks, that
question if they would view the conduct of their Cæsar as any
thing else than a pardonable and natural stratagem of Da
Cupid, to be smiled at rather than subjected to disgrace o
punishment.'

'A nation,' said Count Robert, 'who could smile at such
jest, may Heaven refuse them sympathy at their utmost nee
when their sword is broken in their hand, and their wives an
daughters shrieking in the relentless grasp of a barbarou
enemy!'

Hereward looked upon his companion, whose flushed cheek
and sparkling eyes bore witness to his enthusiasm.

'I see,' he said, 'you are resolved, and I know that you
resolution can in justice be called by no other name than a
act of heroic folly. What then? It is long since life has bee
bitter to the Varangian exile. Morn has raised him from a joy
less bed, which night has seen him lie down upon, wearied wit
wielding a mercenary weapon in the wars of strangers. He
has longed to lay down his life in an honourable cause, and
this is one in which the extremity and very essence of honou
is implicated. It tallies also with my scheme of saving the
Emperor, which will be greatly facilitated by the downfall o
his ungrateful son-in-law.' Then addressing himself to the
Count, he continued, 'Well, sir count, as thou art the perso
principally concerned, I am willing to yield to thy reasoning in
this affair; but I hope you will permit me to mingle with you
resolution some advices of a more everyday and less fantastic
nature. For example, thy escape from the dungeons of the
Blacquernal must soon be generally known. In prudence
indeed, I myself must be the first to communicate it, since
otherwise the suspicion will fall on me. Where do you think
of concealing yourself, for assuredly the search will be close
and general?'

'For that,' said the Count of Paris, 'I must be indebted to
thy suggestion, with thanks for every lie which thou findest
thyself obliged to make, to contrive, and produce in my behalf,
entreating thee only to render them as few as possible, they
being a coin which I myself never fabricate.'

'Sir knight,' answered Hereward, 'let me begin first by
saying that no knight that ever belted sword is more a slave

to truth, when truth is observed towards him, than the poor soldier who talks to thee; but when the game depends not upon fair play, but upon lulling men's cautiousness asleep by falsehood, and drugging their senses by opiate draughts, they who would scruple at no means of deceiving me can hardly expect that I, who am paid in such base money, should pass nothing on my part but what is lawful and genuine. For the present thou must remain concealed within my poor apartment in the barracks of the Varangians, which is the last place where they will think of seeking for thee. Take this, my upper cloak, and follow me; and now that we are about to leave these gardens, thou mayst follow me unsuspected as a sentinel attending his officer; for, take it along with you, noble count, that we Varangians are a sort of persons upon whom the Greeks care not to look very long or fixedly.'

They now reached the gate where they had been admitted by the negress, and Hereward, who was entrusted with the power, it seems, of letting himself out of the philosopher's premises, though not of entering without assistance from the portress, took out a key which turned the lock on the garden side, so that they soon found themselves at liberty. They then proceeded by bye-paths through the city, Hereward leading the way, and the Count following, without speech or remonstrance, until they stood before the portal of the barracks of the Varangians.

'Make haste,' said the sentinel who was on duty, 'dinner is already begun.' The communication sounded joyfully in the ears of Hereward, who was much afraid that his companion might have been stopt and examined. By a side passage he reached his own quarters, and introduced the Count into a small room, the sleeping-chamber of his squire, where he apologised for leaving him for some time; and, going out, locked the door, for fear, as he said, of intrusion.

The demon of suspicion was not very likely to molest a mind so frankly constituted as that of Count Robert, and yet the last action of Hereward did not fail to occasion some painful reflections.

'This man,' he said, 'had needs be true, for I have reposed in him a mighty trust, which few hirelings in his situation would honourably discharge. What is to prevent him to report to the principal officer of his watch that the Frank prisoner, Robert Count of Paris, whose wife stands engaged for so desperate a combat with the Cæsar, has escaped, indeed,

this morning from the prisons of the Blacquernal, but ha
fered himself to be trepanned at noon, and is again a capt
the barracks of the Varangian Guard? What means of de
are mine, were I discovered to these mercenaries? What
could do, by the favour of Our Lady of the Broken Isan
have not failed to achieve. I have slain a tiger in single
bat. I have killed one warder, and conquered the desp
and gigantic creature by whom he was supported. I have
terms enough at command to bring over this Varangian t
side, in appearance at least; yet all this does not encou
me to hope that I could long keep at bay ten or a dozen
men as these beef-fed knaves appear to be, led in upon m
a fellow of thewes and sinews such as those of my late
panion. Yet, for shame, Robert! such thoughts are unwo
a descendant of Charlemagne. When wert thou wont so
ously to count thine enemies, and when wert thou wo
be suspicious, since he whose bosom may truly boast i
incapable of fraud ought in honesty to be the last to ex
it in another? The Varangian's look is open, his coolnes
danger is striking, his speech is more frank and ready
ever was that of a traitor. If he is false, there is no fait
the hand of nature, for truth, sincerity, and courage are wri
upon his forehead.'

While Count Robert was thus reflecting upon his condit
and combating the thick-coming doubts and suspicions w
its uncertainties gave rise to, he began to be sensible tha
had not eaten for many hours; and amidst many do
and fears of a more heroic nature, he half entertained a h
ing suspicion that they meant to let hunger undermine
strength before they adventured into the apartment to
with him.

We shall best see how far these doubts were deserved
Hereward, or how far they were unjust, by following
course after he left his barrack-room. Snatching a morse
dinner, which he eat with an affectation of great hunger, b
in fact, that his attention to his food might be a pretence
dispensing with disagreeable questions, or with conversat
of any kind, he pleaded duty, and, immediately leaving
comrades, directed his course to the lodgings of Achilles Tati
which were a part of the same building. A Syrian slave, w
opened the door, after a deep reverence to Hereward, whom
knew as a favourite attendant of the Acolyte, said to him t
his master was gone forth, but had desired him to say that

he wished to see him, he would find him at the Philosopher's Gardens, so called as belonging to the sage Agelastes.

Hereward turned about instantly, and, availing himself of his knowledge of Constantinople to thread its streets in the shortest time possible, at length stood alone before the door in the garden-wall at which he and the Count of Paris had previously been admitted in the earlier part of the day. The same negress appeared at the same private signal, and when he asked for Achilles Tatius, she replied, with some sharpness, 'Since you were here this morning, I marvel you did not meet him, or that, having business with him, you did not stay till he arrived. Sure I am, that not long after you entered the garden the Acolyte was inquiring for you.'

'It skills not, old woman,' said the Varangian; 'I communicate the reason of my motions to my commander, but 'not to thee.' He entered the garden accordingly, and, avoiding the twilight path that led to the Bower of Love — so was the pavilion named in which he had overheard the dialogue between the Cæsar and the Countess of Paris — he arrived before a simple garden-house, whose humble and modest front seemed to announce that it was the abode of philosophy and learning. Here, passing before the windows, he made some little noise, expecting to attract the attention either of Achilles Tatius or his accomplice Agelastes, as chance should determine. It was the first who heard, and who replied. The door opened; a lofty plume stooped itself, that its owner might cross the threshold, and the stately form of Achilles Tatius entered the gardens. 'What now,' he said, 'our trusty sentinel? what hast thou, at this time of day, come to report to us? Thou art our good friend and highly esteemed soldier, and well we wot thine errand must be of importance since thou hast brought it thyself, and at an hour so unusual.'

'Pray Heaven,' said Hereward, 'that the news I have brought deserve a welcome.'

'Speak them instantly,' said the Acolyte, 'good or bad: thou speakest to a man to whom fear is unknown.' But his eye, which quailed as he looked on the soldier; his colour, which went and came; his hands, which busied themselves in an uncertain manner in adjusting the belt of his sword — all argued a state of mind very different from that which his tone of defiance would fain have implied. 'Courage,' he said, 'my trusty soldier! speak the news to me. I can bear the worst thou hast to tell.'

'In a word, then,' said the Varangian, 'your valour d
me this morning to play the office of master of the
upon those dungeons of the Blacquernal Palace where last
the boisterous Count Robert of Paris was incarcerated —
'I remember well,' said Achilles Tatius. 'What then
'As I reposed me,' said Hereward, 'in an apartment
the vaults, I heard cries from beneath, of a kind whi
tracted my attention. I hastened to examine, and my su
was extreme when, looking down into the dungeon, the
could see nothing distinctly, yet, by the wailing and whi
ing sounds, I conceived that the man of the forest, the a
called Sylvan, whom our soldiers have so far indoctrina
our Saxon tongue as to make him useful in the wards
prison, was bemoaning himself on account of some v
injury. Descending with a torch, I found the bed on
the prisoner had been let down burnt to cinders, the
which had been chained within a spring of it with its
broken to pieces, the creature called Sylvan prostrat
writhing under great pain and terror, and no prisoner wh
in the dungeon. There were marks that all the faste
had been withdrawn by a Mytilenian soldier, companion
watch, when he visited the dungeon at the usual hour
as, in my anxious search, I at length found his dead body,
apparently by a stab in the throat, I was obliged to believe
while I was examining the cell, he, this Count Robert,
whose daring life the adventure is well consistent, had es
to the upper air, by means, doubtless, of the ladder and
door by which I had descended.'
'And wherefore didst thou not instantly call "treason,"
raise the hue and cry?' demanded the Acolyte.
'I dared not venture to do so,' replied the Varangian,
I had instructions from your valour. The alarming c
"treason," and the various rumours likely at this mome
ensue, might have involved a search so close as perch
would have discovered matters in which the Acolyte hi
would have been rendered subject to suspicion.'
'Thou art right,' said Achilles Tatius, in a whisper;
yet it will be necessary that we do not pretend any long
conceal the flight of this important prisoner, if we would
pass for being his accomplices. Where thinkest thou
unhappy fugitive can have taken refuge?'
'That I was in hopes of learning from your valour's gr
wisdom,' said Hereward.

CONSTANTINOPLE.
(From an old engraving.)

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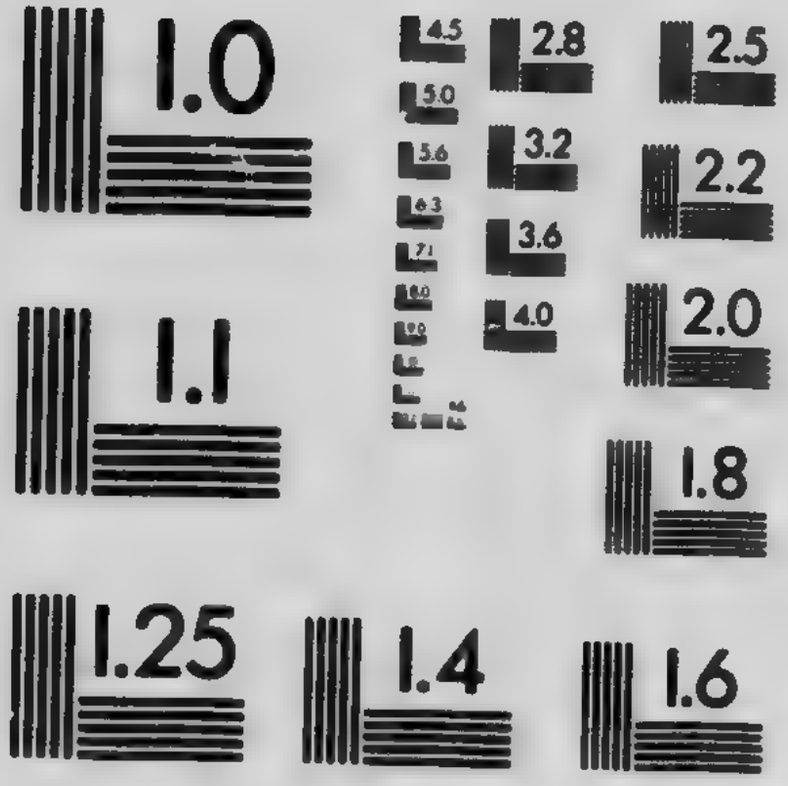

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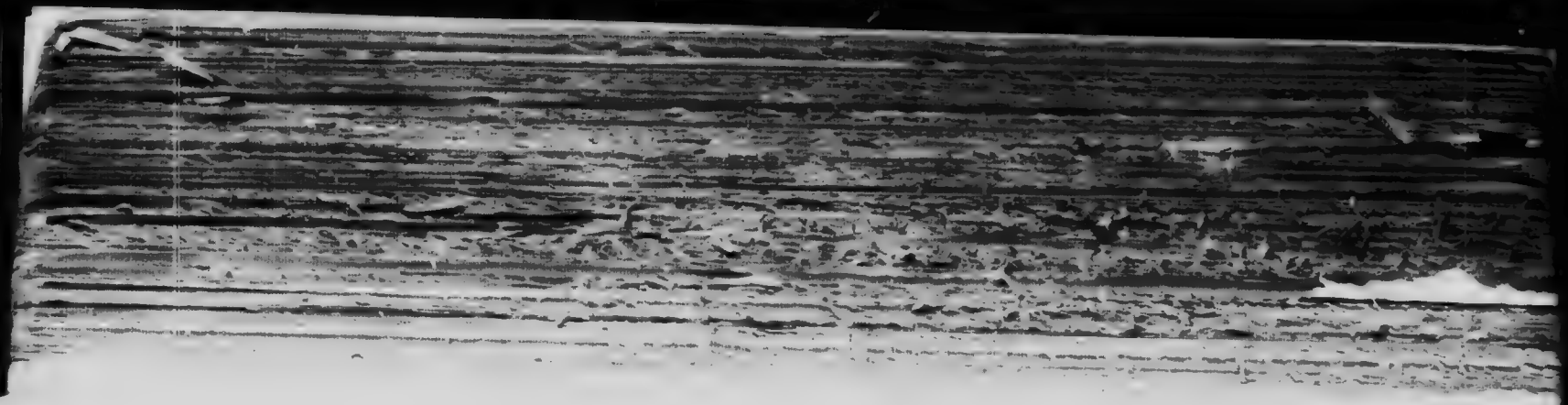


'Thinkest thou not,' said Achilles, 'that he may have crossed the Hellespont, in order to rejoin his own countrymen and adherents?'

'It is much to be dreaded,' said Hereward. 'Undoubtedly, if the Count listened to the advice of any one who knew the face of the country, such would be the very counsel he would receive.'

'The danger, then, of his return at the head of a vengeful body of Franks,' said the Acolyte, 'is not so immediate as I apprehended at first, for the Emperor gave positive orders that the boats and galleys which yesterday transported the crusaders to the shores of Asia should recross the strait, and bring back no single one of them from the step upon their journey on which he had so far furthered them. Besides, they all — their leaders, that is to say — made their vows before crossing that they would not turn back so much as a foot's pace, now that they had set actually forth on the road to Palestine.'

'So, therefore,' said Hereward, 'one of two propositions is unquestionable — either Count Robert is on the eastern side of the strait, having no means of returning with his brethren to avenge the usage he has received, and may therefore be securely set at defiance; or else he lurks somewhere in Constantinople, without a friend or ally to take his part, or encourage him openly to state his supposed wrongs. In either case, there can, I think, be no tact in conveying to the palace the news that he has freed himself, since it would only alarm the court, and afford the Emperor ground for many suspicions. But it is not for an ignorant barbarian like me to prescribe a course of conduct to your valour and wisdom, and methinks the sage Agelastes were a fitter counsellor than such as I am.'

'No — no — no,' said the Acolyte, in a hurried whisper; 'the philosopher and I are right good friends — sworn good friends, very especially bound together; but should it come to this that one of us must needs throw before the footstool of the Emperor the head of the other, I think thou wouldst not advise that I, whose hairs have not a trace of silver, should be the last in making the offering; wherefore, we will say nothing of this mishap, but give thee full power and the highest charge to seek for Count Robert of Paris, be he dead or alive, to secure him within the dungeons set apart for the discipline of our own corps, and when thou hast done so, to bring me notice. I may make him my friend in many ways, by extricating his wife from danger by the axes of my Varangians. What is there in this metropolis that they have to oppose them?'

'When raised in a just cause,' answered Hereward, 'n
'Hah! say'st thou?' said the Acolyte. 'How meane
by that? But I know. Thou art scrupulous about havi
just and lawful command of thy officer in every action in
thou art engaged, and, thinking in that dutiful and sold
manner, it is my duty as thine Acolyte to see thy s
satisfied. A warrant shalt thou have, with full powers,
for and imprison this foreign count of whom we have
speaking. And, hark thee, my excellent friend,' he cont
with some hesitation, 'I think thou hadst better begon
begin, or rather continue, thy search. It is unnecess
inform our friend Agelastes of what has happened, un
advice be more needful than as yet it is on the occasion.
— home to the barracks; I will account to him for thy a
ance here, if he be curious on the subject, which, as a susp
old man, he is likely to be. Go to the barracks, and ac
thou hadst a warrant in every respect full and ample.
provide thee with one when I come back to my quarters.'
The Varangian turned hastily homewards.

'Now, is it not,' he said, 'a strange thing, and enou
make a man a rogue for life, to observe how the dev
courages young beginners in falsehood? I have told a g
lie — at least I have suppressed more truth — than on a
casion before in my whole life, and what is the consequ
Why, my commander throws almost at my head a wa
sufficient to guarantee and protect me in all I have do
propose to do. If the foul fiend were thus regular in pr
ing his votaries, methinks they would have little reas
complain of him, or better men to be astonished at
number. But a time comes, they say, when he seldom fai
desert them. Therefore, get thee behind me, Satan.
have seemed to be thy servant for a short time, it is but
an honest and Christian purpose.'

As he entertained these thoughts, he looked back upon
path, and was startled at an apparition of a creature of a
greater size, and a stranger shape, than human, covered, al
the face, with a reddish-dun fur; his expression an ugly,
yet a sad, melancholy; a cloth was wrapt round one hand,
an air of pain and languor bespoke suffering from a wo
So much was Hereward preoccupied with his own reflecti
that at first he thought his imagination h[illegible]ctually raised
devil; but, after a sudden start of surp[illegible], he recognised
acquaintance Sylvan. 'Hah! old friend,' he said, 'I am ha

thou hast made thy escape to a place where thou wilt find plenty of fruit to support thee. Take my advice — keep out of the way of discovery. Keep thy friend's counsel.'

The man of the wood uttered a chattering noise in return to this address.

'I understand thee,' said Hereward, 'thou wilt tell no tales, thou sayest; and faith I will trust thee rather than the better part of my own two-legged race, who are eternally circumventing or murdering each other.'

A minute after the creature was out of sight Hereward heard the shriek of a female, and a voice which cried for help. The accents must have been uncommonly interesting to the Varangian, since, forgetting his own dangerous situation, he immediately turned and flew to the suppliant's assistance.

CHAPTER XX

She comes! she comes! in all the charms of youth,
Unequall'd love, and unsuspected truth!

HEREWARD was not long in tracing the cry th
the wooded walks, when a female rushed into his
alarmed, as it appeared, by Sy.van, who was pur
her closely. The figure of Hereward, with his axe up
put an instant stop to his career, and with a terrified n
his native cries he withdrew into the thickest of the adj
foliage.

Relieved from his presence, Hereward had time to lo
the female whom he had succoured. She was arrayed
dress which consisted of several colours, that which pred
nated being a pale yellow; her tunic was of this colour,
like a modern gown, was closely fitted to the body, whic
the present case, was that of a tall but very well-formed
son. The mantle, or upper garment, in which the whole fi
was wrapped, was of fine cloth; and the kind of hood w
was attached to it having flown back with the rapidity of
motion, gave to view the hair, beautifully adorned and twi
into a natural head-dress. Beneath this natural head gear
peared a face pale as death, from a sense of the supposed
ger, but which preserved, even amidst its terrors, an exqu
degree of beauty.

Hereward was thunderstruck at this apparition. The d
was neither Grecian, Italian, nor the costume of the Fra
it was *Saxon*, connected by a thousand tender remembran
with Hereward's childhood and youth. The circumstance
most extraordinary. Saxon women, indeed, there were in C
stantinople, who had united their fortunes with those of
Varangians; and those often chose to wear their national d
in the city, because the character and conduct of their husba
secured them a degree of respect which they might not h
met with either as Grecian or as stranger females of a simi
rank. But almost all these were personally known to He

ward. It was no time, however, for reverie: he was himself in danger, the situation of the young female might be no safe one. In every case, it was judicious to quit the more public part of the gardens; he therefore lost not a moment in conveying the fainting Saxon to a retreat he fortunately was acquainted with. A covered path, obscured by vegetation, led through a species of labyrinth to an artificial cave, at the bottom of which, half-paved with shells, moss, and spar, lay the gigantic and half-recumbent statue of a river deity, with its usual attributes — that is, its front crowned with water-lilies and sedges, and its ample hand half-resting upon an empty urn. The attitude of the whole figure corresponded with the motto — 'I SLEEP — AWAKE ME NOT.'

'Accursed relic of paganism,' said Hereward, who was, in proportion to his light, a zealous Christian — 'brutish stock or stone that thou art! I will wake thee with a vengeance.' So saying, he struck the head of the slumbering deity with his battle-axe, and deranged the play of the fountain so much that the water began to pour into the basin.

'Thou art a good block, nevertheless,' said the Varangian, 'to send succour so needful to the aid of my poor countrywoman. Thou shalt give her also, with thy leave, a portion of thy couch.' So saying, he arranged his fair burden, who was as yet insensible, upon the pedestal where the figure of the river god reclined. In doing this, his attention was recalled to her face, and again and again he was thrilled with an emotion of hope, but so excessively like fear that it could only be compared to the flickering of a torch, uncertain whether it is to light up or be instantly extinguished. With a sort of mechanical attention, he continued to make such efforts as he could to recall the intellect of the beautiful creature before him. His feelings were those of the astronomical sage, to whom the rise of the moon slowly restores the contemplation of that heaven which is at once, as a Christian, his hope of felicity, and, as a philosopher, the source of his knowledge. The blood returned to her cheek, and reanimation, and even recollection, took place in her earlier than in the astonished Varangian.

'Blessed Mary!' she said, 'have I indeed tasted the last bitter cup, and is it here where thou reunitest thy votaries after death? Speak, Hereward, if thou art aught but an empty creature of the imagination — speak, and tell me if I have but dreamed of that monstrous ogre!'

'Collect thyself, my beloved Bertha,' said the Anglo-Saxon,

recalled by the sound of her voice, 'and prepare to en
what thou livest to witness, and thy Hereward survives to
That hideous thing exists — nay, do not start, and look
hiding-place — thy own gentle hand with a riding-rod is suffi
to tame its courage. And am I not here, Bertha? Wou
thou wish another safeguard?'

'No — no,' exclaimed she, seizing on the arm of her recov
lover. 'Do I not know you now?'

'And is it but now you know me, Bertha?' said Herewar

'I suspected before,' she said, casting down her eyes;
I know with certainty that mark of the boar's tusk.'

Hereward suffered her imagination to clear itself from
shock it had received so suddenly before he ventured to en
upon present events, in which there was so much both to do
and to fear. He permitted her, therefore, to recall to
memory all the circumstances of the rousing the hide
animal, assisted by the tribes of both their fathers. She m
tioned in broken words the flight of arrows discharged agai
the boar by young and old, male and female, and how her
well-aimed but feeble shaft wounded him sharply; she for
not how, incensed at the pain, the creature rushed upon he
the cause, laid her palfrey dead upon the spot, and would s
have slain her, had not Hereward, when every attempt fai
to bring his horse up to the monster, thrown himself from
seat and interposed personally between the boar and Bert
The battle was not decided without a desperate struggle;
boar was slain, but Hereward received the deep gash upon
brow which she whom he had saved now recalled to her me
ory. 'Alas!' she said, 'what have we been to each other sin
that period? and what are we now, in this foreign land?'

'Answer for thyself, my Bertha,' said the Varan ian, 'if th
canst; and if thou canst with truth say that th
Bertha who vowed affection to Hereward, bel
sinful to suppose that the saints have brought
a view of our being afterwards separated.'

'Hereward,' said Bertha, 'you have not preserved the bird
your bosom safer than I have: at home or abroad, in servitu
or in freedom, amidst sorrow or joy, plenty or want, my thou
was always on the troth I had plighted to Hereward at t
stone of Odin.'

'Say no more of that,' said Hereward; 'it was an impio
rite, and good could not come of it.'

'Was it then so impious?' she said, the unbidden tear rus

ing into her large blue eye. 'Alas! it was a pleasure to reflect that Hereward was mine by that solemn engagement.'

'Listen to me, my Bertha,' said Hereward, taking her hand. 'We were then almost children; and though our vow was in itself innocent, yet it was so far wrong, as being sworn in the presence of a dumb idol, representing one who was, while alive, a bloody and cruel magician. But we will, the instant an opportunity offers itself, renew our vow before a shrine of real sanctity, and promise suitable penance for our ignorant acknowledgment of Odin, to propitiate the real Deity, who can bear us through those storms of adversity which are like to surround us.'

Leaving them for the time to their love-discourse, of a nature pure, simple, and interesting, we shall give, in few words, all that the reader needs to know of their separate history between the boar's hunt and the time of their meeting in the gardens of Agelastes.

In that doubtful state experienced by outlaws, Waltheoff, the father of Hereward, and Engelred, the parent of Bertha, used to assemble their unsubdued tribes, sometimes in the fertile regions of Devonshire, sometimes in the dark wooded solitudes of Hampshire, but as much as possible within the call of the bugle of the famous Ederic the Forester, so long leader of the insurgent Saxons. The chiefs we have mentioned were among the last bold men who asserted the independence of the Saxon race of England; and like their captain, Ederic, they were generally known by the name of Foresters, as men who lived by hunting, when their power of making excursions was checked and repelled. Hence they made a step backwards in civilisation, and became more like to their remote ancestors of German descent than they were to their more immediate and civilised predecessors, who, before the battle of Hastings, had advanced considerably in the arts of civilised life.

Old superstitions had begun to revive among them, and hence the practice of youths and maidens plighting their troth at the stone circles dedicated, as it was supposed, to Odin, in whom, however, they had long ceased to nourish any of the sincere belief which was entertained by their heathen ancestors.

In another respect these outlaws were fast reassuming a striking peculiarity of the ancient Germans. Their circumstances naturally brought the youth of both sexes much together, and by early marriage, or less permanent connexions, the population would have increased far beyond the means which the outlaws

had to maintain, or even to protect, themselves. The law
the Foresters, therefore, strictly enjoined that marriages sh
be prohibited until the bridegroom was twenty-one years c
plete. Future alliances were indeed often formed by the yo
people, nor was this discountenanced by their parents, provi
that the lovers waited until the period when the majority
the bridegroom should permit them to marry. Such youth
infringed this rule incurred the dishonourable epithet of '
dering,' or worthless – an epithet of a nature so insulting, t
men were known to have slain themselves rather than end
life under such opprobrium. But the offenders were very
amidst a race trained in moderation and self-denial; and he
it was that woman, worshipped for so many years like so
thing sacred, was received, when she became the head o
family, into the arms and heart of a husband who had so l
expected her, was treated as something more elevated than
mere idol of the moment, and, feeling the rate at which
was valued, endeavoured by her actions to make her life c
respond with it.

It was by the whole population of these tribes as well
their parents, that, after the adventure of the boar-hunt, He
ward and Bertha were considered as lovers whose alliance w
pointed out by Heaven, and they were encouraged to appro
mate as much as their mutual inclinations prompted the
The youths of the tribe avoided asking Bertha's hand at t
dance, and the maidens used no maidenly entreaty or artifi
to detain Hereward beside them if Bertha was present at t
feast. They clasped each other's hands through the perforat
stone which they called the altar of Odin, though later ag
have ascribed it to the Druids, and they implored that, if th
broke their faith to each other, their fault might be avenged
the twelve swords which w now drawn around them dur
the ceremony by as many youths, and that their misfort
might be so many as twelve maidens, who stood around wit
their hair loosened, should be unable to recount, either in pro
or verse.

The torch of the Saxon Cupid shone for some years a
brilliant as when it was first lighted. The time, however
came when they were to be tried by adversity, though n
deserved by the perfidy of either. Years had gone past, an
Hereward had to count with anxiety how many months an
weeks were to separate him from the bride who was beginnin
already by degrees to shrink less shyly from the expression

and caresses of one who was soon to term her all his own. William Rufus, however, had formed a plan of totally extirpating the Foresters, whose implacable hatred and restless love of freedom had so often disturbed the quiet of his kingdom, and despised his forest laws. He assembled his Norman forces, and united to them a body of Saxons who had submitted to his rule. He thus brought an overpowering force upon the bands of Walthcoff and Engelred, who found no resource but to throw the females of their tribe, and such as could not bear arms, into a convent dedicated to St. Augustine, of which Kenelm their relation was prior, and then turning to the battle, vindicated their ancient valour by fighting it to the last. Both the unfortunate chiefs remained dead on the field, and Hereward and his brother had wellnigh shared their fate; but some Saxon inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who adventured on the field of battle, which the victors had left bare of everything save the booty of the kites and the ravens, found the bodies of the youths still retaining life. As they were generally well known and much beloved by these people, Hereward and his brother were taken care of till their wounds began to close and their strength returned. Hereward then heard the doleful news of the death of his father and Engelred. His next inquiry was concerning his betrothed bride and her mother. The poor inhabitants could give him little information. Some of the females who had taken refuge in the convent the Norman knights and nobles had seized upon as their slaves, and the rest, with the monks who had harboured them, were turned adrift, and their place of retreat was completely sacked and burnt to the ground.

Half-dead himself at hearing these tidings, Hereward sallied out, and at every risk of death, for the Saxon Foresters were treated as outlaws, commenced inquiries after those so dear to him. He asked concerning the particular fate of Bertha and her mother among the miserable creatures who yet hovered about the neighbourhood of the convent, like a few half-scorched bees about their smothered hive. But, in the magnitude of their own terrors, none had retained eyes for their neighbours, and all that they could say was, that the wife and daughter of Engelred were certainly lost; and their imaginations suggested so many heart-rending details to this conclusion, that Hereward gave up all thoughts of further researches, likely to terminate so uselessly and so horribly.

The young Saxon had been all his life bred up in a patriotic

hatred to the Normans, who did not, it was likely, b
dearer to his thoughts in consequence of this victory.
dreamed at first of crossing the strait, to make war a
the hated enemy in their own country; but an idea s
travagant did not long retain possession of his mind. Hi
was decided by his encountering an aged palmer, who kn
pretended to have known, his father, and to be a nati
England. This man was a disguised Varangian, selecte
the purpose, possessed of art and dexterity, and well pro
with money. He had little difficulty in persuading Here
in the hopeless desolation of his condition, to join the V
gian Guard, at this moment at war with the Normans, u
which name it suited Hereward's prepossessions to repr
the Emperor's wars with Robert Guiscard, his son Bohem
and other adventurers, in Italy, Greece, or Sicily. A jou
to the East also inferred a pilgrimage, and gave the unf
nate Hereward the chance of purchasing pardon for his sin
visiting the Holy Land. In gaining Hereward, the recr
also secured the services of his elder brother, who had v
not to separate from him.

The high character of both brothers for courage ind
this wily agent to consider them as a great prize, and it
from the memoranda respecting the history and characte
those whom he recruited, in which the elder had been u
servedly communicative, that Agelastes picked up the i
mation respecting Hereward's family and circumstances, wh
at their first secret interview, he made use of to imp
upon the Varangian the idea of his supernatural knowle
Several of his companions-in-arms were thus gained over.
it will easily be guessed that these memorials were entru
to the keeping of Achilles Tatius, and he, to further their j
purposes, imparted them to Agelastes, who thus obtained a g
eral credit for supernatural knowledge among these ignor
men. But Hereward's blunt faith and honesty enabled hin
shun the snare.

Such being the fortunes of Hereward, those of Bertha form
the subject of a broken and passionate communication betwe
the lovers, broken like an April day, and mingled with man
tender caress, such as modesty permits to lovers when th
meet again unexpectedly after a separation which threaten
to be eternal. But the story may be comprehended in f
words. Amid the general sack of the monastery, an old N
man knight seized upon Bertha as his prize. Struck with

beauty, he designed her as an attendant upon his daughter, just then come out of the years of childhood, and the very apple of her father's eye, being the only child of his beloved countess, and sent late in life to bless their marriage bed. It was in the order of things that the Lady of Aspramonte, who was considerably younger than the knight, should govern her husband, and that Brenhilda, their daughter, should govern both her parents.

The knight of Aspramonte, however, it may be observed, entertained some desire to direct his young offspring to more feminine amusements than those which began already to put her life frequently in danger. Contradiction was not to be thought of, as the good old knight knew by experience. The influence and example of a companion a little older than herself might be of some avail, and it was with this view that, in the confusion of the sack, Aspramonte seized upon the youthful Bertha. Terrified to the utmost degree, she clung to her mother, and the knight of Aspramonte, who had a softer heart than was then usually found under a steel cuirass, moved by the affliction of the mother and daughter, and recollecting that the former might also be a useful attendant upon his lady, extended his protection to both, and, conveying them out of the press, paid the soldiers who ventured to dispute the spoil with him partly in some small pieces of money, and partly in dry blows with the reverse of his lance.

The well-natured knight soon after returned to his own castle, and being a man of an orderly life and virtuous habits, the charming beauties of the Saxon virgin, and the more ripened charms of her mother, did not prevent their travelling in all honour as well as safety to his family fortress, the Castle of Aspramonte. Here such masters as could be procured were got together to teach the young Bertha every sort of female accomplishment, in the hope that her mistress, Brenhilda, might be inspired with a desire to partake in her education; but although this so far succeeded that the Saxon captive became highly skilled in such music, needlework, and other female accomplishments as were known to the time, yet her young mistress, Brenhilda, retained the taste for those martial amusements which had so sensibly grieved her father, but to which her mother, who herself had nourished such fancies in her youth, readily gave sanction.

The captives, however, were kindly treated. Brenhilda

[1] [Compare pp. 9 and 131.]

became infinitely attached to the young Anglo-Saxon, she loved less for her ingenuity in arts than for her ac in field sports, to which her early state of independen trained her.

The Lady of Aspramonte was also kind to both the cap but in one particular she exercised a piece of petty ty over them. She had imbibed an idea, strengthened by a doting father-confessor, that the Saxons were heathens at time, or at least heretics, and made a positive point wit husband that the bondswoman and girl who were to atte her person and that of her daughter should be qualified f office by being anew admitted into the Christian Churc baptism.

Though feeling the falsehood and injustice of the accusa the mother had sense enough to submit to necessity, received the name of Martha in all form at the altar, to w she answered during the rest of her life.

But Bertha showed a character upon this occasion inco tent with the general docility and gentleness of her ten She boldly refused to be admitted anew into the pale o church, of which her conscience told her she was alrea member, or to exchange for another the name originally g her at the font. It was in vain that the old knight c manded, that the lady threatened, and that her mother adv and entreated. More closely pressed in private by her mot she let her motive be known, which had not before been pected. 'I know,' she said, with a flood of tears, 'that father would have died ere I was subjected to this insult: then — who shall assure me that vows which were made to Saxon Bertha will be binding if a French Agatha be substitu in her stead? They may banish me,' she said, 'or kill m they will, but if the son of Waltheoff should again meet w the daughter of Engelred, he shall meet that Bertha whom knew in the forests of Hampton.'

All argument was in vain: the Saxon maiden remai obstinate, and to try to break her resolution, the Lady Aspramonte at length spoke of dismissing her from the serv of her young mistress, and banishing her from the castle. this also she had made up her mind, and she answered firm though respectfully, that she would sorrow bitterly at parti with her young lady; but as to the rest, she would rather l under her own name than be recreant to the faith of l fathers, and condemn it as heresy, by assuming one of Fr

origin. The Lady Brenhilda, in the meantime, entered the chamber where her mother was just about to pass the threatened doom of banishment. 'Do not stop for my entrance, madam,' said the dauntless young lady; 'I am as much concerned in the doom which you are about to pass as is Bertha; if she crosses the drawbridge of Aspramonte as an exile, so will I, when she has dried her tears, of which even my petulance could never wring one from her eyes. She shall be my squire and body attendant, and Launcelot, the bard, shall follow with my spear and shield.'

'And you will return, mistress,' said her mother, 'from so foolish an expedition before the sun sets?'

'So Heaven further me in my purpose, lady,' answered the young heiress, 'the sun shall neither rise nor set that sees us return till this name of Bertha, and of her mistress, Brenhilda, are wafted as far as the trumpet of fame can sound them. Cheer up, my sweetest Bertha!' she said, taking her attendant by the hand, 'if Heaven hath torn thee from thy country and thy plighted troth, it hath given thee a sister and a friend, with whom thy fame shall be for ever blended.'

The Lady of Aspramonte was confounded. She knew that her daughter was perfectly capable of the wild course which she had announced, and that she herself, even with her husband's assistance, would be unable to prevent her following it. She passively listened, therefore, while the Saxon matron, formerly Urica, but now Martha, addressed her daughter. 'My child,' she said, 'as you value honour, virtue, safety, and gratitude, soften your heart towards your master and mistress, and follow the advice of a parent, who has more years and more judgment than you. And you, my dearest young lady, let not your lady-mother think that an attachment to the exercises you excel in has destroyed in your bosom filial affection and a regard to the delicacy of your sex. As they seem both obstinate, madam,' continued the matron, after watching the influence of this advice upon the young women, 'perhaps if it may be permitted me, I could state an alternative which might, in the meanwhile, satisfy your lady-ship's wishes, accommodate itself to the wilfulness of my obstinate daughter, and answer the kind purpose of her generous mistress.'

The Lady of Aspramonte signed to the Saxon matron to proceed. She went on accordingly: 'The Saxons, dearest lady, of the present day, are neither pagans nor heretics: they are, in the time of keeping Easter, as well as in all other disputable

doctrine, humbly obedient to the Pope of Rome; and this good bishop well knows, since he upbraided some of the mestics for calling me an old heathen. Yet our names are couth in the ears of the Franks, and bear, perhaps, a heathe sound. If it be not exacted that my daughter submit to a rite of baptism, she will lay aside her Saxon name of Be upon all occasions while in your honourable household. will cut short a debate which, with forgiveness, I thin scarce of importance enough to break the peace of this ca I will engage that, in gratitude for this indulgence of a tri scruple, my daughter, if possible, shall double the zeal assiduity of her service to her young lady.'

The Lady of Aspramonte was glad to embrace the m which this offer presented of extricating herself from the pute with as little compromise of dignity as could well be. the good Lord Bishop approved of such a compromise,' said, 'she would for herself withdraw her opposition.' prelate approved accordingly, the more readily that he informed that the young heiress desired earnestly such agreement. The peace of the castle was restored, and Be recognised her new name of Agatha as a name of service, not a name of baptism.

One effect the dispute certainly produced, and that increasing in an enthusiastic degree the love of Bertha for young mistress. With that amiable failing of attached mestics and humble friends, she endeavoured to serve he she knew she loved to be served; and therefore indulged mistress in those chivalrous fancies which distinguished even in her own age, and in ours would have rendered he female Quixote. Bertha, indeed, never caught the frenzy her mistress; but, strong, willing, and able-bodied, she rea qualified herself to act upon occasion as a squire of the b to a lady adventuress; and, accustomed from her childhoo see blows dealt, blood flowing, and men dying, she could with an undazzled eye upon the dangers which her mistress countered, and seldom teazed her with remonstrances, un when those were unusually great. This compliance on m occasions gave Bertha a right of advice upon some, wh always given with the best intentions and at fitting tim strengthened her influence with her mistress, which a cours conduct savouring of diametrical opposition would certai have destroyed.

A few more words serve to announce the death of

knight of Aspramonte, the romantic marriage of the young lady with the Count of Paris, their engagement in the crusade, and the detail of events with which the reader is acquainted.

Hereward did not exactly comprehend some of the later incidents of the story, owing to a slight strife which arose between Bertha and him during the course of her narrative. When she avowed the girlish simplicity with which she obstinately refused to change her name, because, in her apprehension, the troth-plight betwixt her and her lover might be thereby prejudiced, it was impossible for Hereward not to acknowledge her tenderness by snatching her to his bosom and impressing his grateful thanks upon her lips. She extricated herself immediately from his grasp, however, with cheeks more crimsoned in modesty than in anger, and gravely addressed her lover thus: 'Enough — enough, Hereward, this may be pardoned to so unexpected a meeting, but we must in future remember that we are probably the last of our race; and let it not be said that the manners of their ancestors were forgotten by Hereward and by Bertha. Think that, though we are alone, the shades of our fathers are not far off, and watch to see what use we make of the meeting which, perhaps, their intercession has procured us.'

'You wrong me, Bertha,' said Hereward, 'if you think me capable of forgetting my own duty and yours at a moment when our thanks are due to Heaven, to be testified very differently than by infringing on its behests or the commands of our parents. The question is now, How we shall rejoin each other when we separate, since separate, I fear, we must?'

'O! do not say so,' exclaimed the unfortunate Bertha.

'It must be so,' sai' Hereward, 'for a time; but I swear to thee, by the hilt of my sword and the handle of my battle-axe, that blade was never so true to shaft as I will be to thee.'

'But wherefore, then, leave me, Hereward?' said the maiden; 'and, oh! wherefore not assist me in the release of my mistress?'

'Of thy mistress!' said Hereward. 'Shame! that thou canst give that name to mortal woman!'

'But she *is* my mistress,' answered Bertha, 'and by a thousand kind ties, which cannot be separated so long as gratitude is the reward of kindness.'

'And what is her danger,' said Hereward — 'what is it she wants, this accomplished lady whom thou callest mistress?'

'Her honour, her life, are alike in danger,' said Bertha.

'She has agreed to meet the Cæsar in the field, and
not hesitate, like a base-born miscreant, to take every
tage in the encounter, which, I grieve to say, may in all
hood be fatal to my mistress.'

'Why dost thou think so?' answered Hereward. 'Th
has won many single combats, unless she is belied, a
adversaries more formidable than the Cæsar.'

'True,' said the Saxon maiden; 'but you speak of
that passed in a far different land, where faith and
are not empty sounds, as, alas! they seem but too
to be here. Trust me, it is no girlish terror which sen
out in this disguise of my country dress, which, the
finds respect at Constantinople: I go to let the chiefs
crusade know the peril in which the noble lady stand
trust to their humanity, to their religion, to their l
honour, and fear of disgrace, for assistance in this l
need; and now that I have had the blessing of meetin
thee, all besides will go well — all will go well — and I wil
to my mistress and report whom I have seen.'

'Tarry yet another moment, my recovered treasure,
Hereward, 'and let me balance this matter carefully.
Frankish lady holds the Saxons like the very dust that
brushest from the hem of her garment. She treats, sh
gards, the Saxons as pagans and heretics. She has dar
impose slavish tasks upon thee, born in freedom. Her fa
sword has been embrued to the hilt with Anglo-Saxon b
perhaps that of Waltheoff and Engelred has added depth t
stain. She has been, besides, a presumptuous fool, usu
for herself the trophies and warlike character which b
to the other sex. Lastly, it will be hard to find a champi
fight in her stead, since all the crusaders have passed
to Asia, which is the land, they say, in which they have
to war; and by orders of the Emperor no means of return t
hither shore will be permitted to any of them.'

'Alas — alas!' said Bertha, 'how does this world ch
us! The son of Waltheoff I once knew brave, ready to a
distress, bold and generous. Such was what I pictured hi
myself during his absence. I have met him again, and h
calculating, cold, and selfish.'

'Hush, damsel,' said the Varangian, 'and know him
whom thou speakest ere thou judgest him. The Countes
Paris is such as I have said; yet let her appear boldly in
lists, and when the trumpet shall sound thrice another s

reply, which shall announce the arrival of her own noble lord to do battle in her stead; or, should he fail to appear, I will requite her kindness to thee, Bertha, and be ready in his place.'

'Wilt thou? — wilt thou indeed?' said the damsel. 'That was spoken like the son of Waltheoff — like the genuine stock. I will home and comfort my mistress; for surely if the judgment of God ever directed the issue of a judicial combat, its influence will descend upon this. But you hint that the Count is here — that he is at liberty; she will inquire about that.'

'She must be satisfied,' replied Hereward, 'to know that her husband is under the guidance of a friend who will endeavour to protect him from his own extravagancies and follies; or, at all events, of one who, if he cannot properly be called a friend, has certainly not acted, and will not act, towards him the part of an enemy. And now, farewell, long lost — long loved ——!' Before he could say more, the Saxon maiden, after two or three vain attempts to express her gratitude, threw herself into her lover's arms, and, despite the coyness which she had recently shown, impressed upon his lips the thanks which she could not speak.

They parted, Bertha returning to her mistress at the lodge, which she had left both with trouble and danger, and Hereward by the portal kept by the negro-portress, who, complimenting the handsome Varangian on his success among the fair, intimated that she had been in some sort a witness of his meeting with the Saxon damsel. A piece of gold, part of a late largesse, amply served to bribe her tongue; and the soldier, clear of the gardens of the philosopher, sped back as he might to the barrack, judging that it was full time to carry some supply to Count Robert, who had been left without food the whole day.

It is a common popular saying that, as the sensation of hunger is not connected with any pleasing or gentle emotion, so it is particularly remarkable for irritating those of anger and spleen. It is not, therefore, very surprising that Count Robert, who had been so unusually long without sustenance, should receive Hereward with a degree of impatience beyond what the occasion merited, and injurious certainly to the honest Varangian, who had repeatedly exposed his life that day for the interest of the Countess and the Count himself.

'Soh, sir!' he said, in that accent of affected r int by which a superior modifies his displeasure against h inferior into a cold and scornful expression, 'you have played a libera!

host to us! Not that it is of consequence; but meth
count of the most Christian kingdom dines not every da
a mercenary soldier, and might expect, if not the ostent
at least the needful, part of hospitality.'

'And methinks,' replied the Varangian, 'O most Ch
Count, that such of your high rank as, by choice or
become the guests of such as I may think themselves pl
and blame not their host's niggardliness, but the difficu
his circumstances, if dinner should not present itself o
than once in four-and-twenty hours.' So saying, he cla
hands together, and his domestic Edric entered. His
looked astonished at the entrance of this third party into
retirement. 'I will answer for this man,' said Hereward
addressed him in the following words: 'What food hast
Edric, to place before the honourable Count?'

'Nothing but the cold pasty,' replied the attendant,
vellously damaged by your honour's encounter at breakfas

The military domestic, as intimated, brought forward a
pasty, but which had already that morning sustained a fu
attack, insomuch that Count Robert of Paris, who, lik
noble Normans, was somewhat nice and delicate in his e
was in some doubt whether his scrupulousness should not
vail over his hunger; but, on looking more closely, sight, s
and a fast of twenty hours joined to convince him tha
pasty was an excellent one, and that the charger on whi
was presented possessed corners yet untouched. At le
having suppressed his scruples and made bold inroad
the remains of the dish, he paused to partake of a fla
strong red wine which stood invitingly beside him, and a
draught increased the good-humour which had begun to
place towards Hereward, in exchange for the displeasure
which he had received him.

'Now, by Heaven!' he said, 'I myself ought to be asha
to lack the courtesy which I recommend to others. Here
I, with the manners of a Flemish boor, been devouring the
visions of my gallant host, without even asking him to sit d
at h.. own table and to partake of his own good cheer!'

'I will not strain courtesies with you for that,' said H
ward; and, thrusting his hand into the pasty, he proce
with great speed and dexterity to devour the miscellan
contents, a handful of which was inclosed in his grasp.
Count now withdrew from the table, partly in disgust at
rustic proceedings of Hereward, who, however, by now cal

Edric to join him in his attack upon the pasty, showed that he had, in fact, according to his manners, subjected himself previously to some observance of respect towards his guest, while the assistance of his attendant enabled him to make a clear *cacabulum* of what was left. Count Robert at length summoned up courage sufficient to put a question which had been trembling upon his lips ever since Hereward had returned.

'Have thine inquiries, my gallant friend, learned more concerning my unfortunate wife, my faithful Brenhilda?'

'Tidings I have,' said the Anglo-Saxon, 'but whether pleasing or not, yourself must be the judge. This much I have learned: she hath, as you know, come under an engagement to meet the Cæsar in arms in the lists, but under conditions which you may perhaps think strange; these, however, she hath entertained without scruple.'

'Let me know these terms,' said the Count of Paris; 'they will, I think, appear less strange in my eyes than in thine.' But while he affected to speak with the utmost coolness, the husband's sparkling eye and crimsoned cheek betrayed the alteration which had taken place in his feelings.

'The lady and the Cæsar,' said Hereward, 'as you partly heard yourself, are to meet in fight; if the Countess wins, of course she remains the wife of the noble Count of Paris; if she loses, she becomes the paramour of the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius.'

'Saints and angels forbid!' said Count Robert, 'were we to permit such treason to triumph, we might be paramount to doubting their divinity.'

'Yet methinks,' said the Anglo-Saxon, 'it were no disgraceful precaution that both you and I, with other friends if we can obtain such, should be seen under shield in the lists on the morning of the conflict. To triumph or to be defeated is in the hand of fate; but what we cannot fail to witness is, whether or not the lady receives that fair-play which is the due of an honourable combatant, and which, as you have yourself seen, can be sometimes basely transgressed in this Grecian empire.'

'On that condition,' said the Count, 'and protesting that not even the extreme danger of my lady shall make me break through the rule of a fair fight, I will surely attend the lists, if thou, brave Saxon, canst find me any means of doing so. Yet stay,' he continued, after reflecting for a moment, 'thou shalt promise not to let her know that her count is on the field, far less to point him out to her eye among the press of

warriors. O, thou dost not know that the sight of the h
will sometimes steal from us our courage, even when
most to achieve!'

'We will endeavour,' said the Varangian, 'to arrange u
according to thy pleasure, so that thou findest out no mo
tastical difficulties; for, by my word, an affair so compl
in itself requires not to be confused by the fine-spun
of thy national gallantry. Meantime, much must be don
night; and while I go about it, thou, sir knight, hadst
remain here, with such disguise of garments and such
as Edric may be able to procure for thee. Fear nothing
intrusion on the part of thy neighbours. We Varangia
spect each other's secrets, of whatever nature they may c
to be.'

CHAPTER XXI

But for our trusty brother-in-law, and the abbot,
With all the rest of that consorted crew,
Destruction straight shall dog them at the heels.
Good uncle, help to order several powers
To Oxford, or where'er these traitors are.
They shall not live within this world, I swear.

Richard II.

AS Hereward spoke the last words narrated in the foregoing chapter, he left the Count in his apartment, and proceeded to the Blacquernal Palace. We traced his first entrance into the court, but since then he had frequently been summoned, not only by order of the Princess Anna Comnena, who delighted in asking him questions concerning the customs of his native country, and marking down the replies in her own inflated language, but also by the direct command of the Emperor himself, who had the humour of many princes, that of desiring to obtain direct information from persons in a very inferior station in their court. The ring which the Princess had given to the Varangian served as a pass-token more than once, and was now so generally known by the slaves of the palace, that Hereward had only to slip it into the hand of a principal person among them, and was introduced into a small chamber, not distant from the saloon already mentioned, dedicated to the Muses. In this small apartment, the Emperor, his spouse Irene, and their accomplished daughter Anna Comnena were seated together, clad in very ordinary apparel, as indeed the furniture of the room itself was of the kind used by respectable citizens, saving that mattrasses, composed of eider-down, hung before each door to prevent the risk of eavesdropping.

'Our trusty Varangian,' said the Empress.

'My guide and tutor respecting the manners of those steel-clad men,' said the Princess Anna Comnena, 'of whom it is so necessary that I should form an accurate idea.'

'Your Imperial Majesty,' said the Empress, 'will not, I

trust, think your consort and your muse-inspired dar gh
too many to share with you the intelligence brought h
brave and loyal man?'

'Dearest wife and daughter,' returned the Emperor, '
hitherto spared you the burden of a painful secret, which
locked in my own bosom, at whatever expense of solitary
and unimparted anxiety. Noble daughter, you in part
will feel this calamity, learning, as you must learn, to
odiously of one of whom it has hitherto been your duty t
a very different opinion.'

'Holy Mary!' exclaimed the Princess.

'Rally yourself,' said the Emperor; 'remember you
child of the purple chamber, born not to weep for your fa
wrongs, but to avenge them; not to regard even him wh
lain by your side as half so important as the sacred im
grandeur, of which you are yourself a partaker.'

'What can such words preface?' said Anna Commen
great agitation.

'They say,' answered the Emperor, 'that the Cæsar
ungrateful man to all my bounties, and even to that
annexed him to my own house, and made him by adoptio
own son. He hath consorted himself with a knot of tra
whose very names are enough to raise the foul fiend, as
snatch his assured prey.'

'Could Nicephorus do this?' said the astonished and fo
Princess — 'Nicephorus, who has so often called my eyes
lights by which he steered his path? Could he do this t
father, to whose exploits he has listened hour after hour,
testing that he knew not whether it was the beauty of
language or the heroism of the action which most encha
him? Thinking with the same thought, seeing with the s
eye, loving with the same heart — O, my father! it is im
sible that he could be so false. Think of the neighbou
temple of the Muses.'

'And if I did,' murmured Alexius in his heart, 'I sh
think of the only apology which could be proposed for
traitor. A little is well enough, but the full soul loatheth
honeycomb.' Then speaking aloud, 'My daughter,' he s
'be comforted. We ourselves were unwilling to believe
shameful truth; but our guards have been debauched; t
commander, that ungrateful Achilles Tatius, with the e
traitor, Agelastes, has been seduced to favour our impris
ment or murder; and, alas for Greece! in the very mom

when she required the fostering care of a parent, she was to be deprived of him by a sudden and merciless blow.'

Here the Emperor wept, whether for the loss to be sustained by his subjects or of his own life it is hard to say.

'Methinks,' said Irene, 'your Imperial Highness is slow in taking measures against the danger.

'Under your gracious permission, mother,' answered the Princess, 'I would rather say he was hasty in giving belief to it. Methinks the evidence of a Varangian, granting him to be ever so stout a man-at arms, is but a frail guarantee against the honour of your son in-law, the approved bravery and fidelity of the captain of your guards, the deep sense, virtue, and profound wisdom of the greatest of your philosophers ——'

'And the conceit of an over-educated daughter,' said the Emperor, 'who will not allow her parent to judge in what most concerns him. I will tell thee, Anna, I know every one of them, and the trust which may be reposed in them: the honour of your Nicephorus, the bravery and fidelity of the Acolyte, and the virtue and wisdom of Agelastes — have I not had them all in my purse? And had my purse continued well filled, and my arm strong as it was of late, there they would have still remained. But the butterflies went off as the weather became cold, and I must meet the tempest without their assistance. You talk of want of proof? I have proof sufficient when I see danger: this honest soldier brought me indications which corresponded with my own private remarks, made on purpose. Varangian he shall be of Varangians; Acolyte he shall be named, in place of the present traitor; and who knows what may come thereafter?'

'May it please your Highness,' said the Varangian, who had been hitherto silent, 'many men in this empire rise to dignity by the fall of their original patrons, but it is a road to greatness to which I cannot reconcile my conscience; moreover, having recovered a friend from whom I was long ago separated, I shall require, in short space, your imperial license for going hence, where I shall leave thousands of enemies behind me, and, spending my life, like many of my countrymen, under the banner of King William of Scotland ——'

'Part with *thee*, most inimitable man!' cried the Emperor, with emphasis; 'where shall I get a soldier — a champion — a friend, so faithful?'

'Noble sir,' replied the Anglo-Saxon, 'I am every way

sensible to your goodness and munificence; but let me
you to call me by my own name, and to promise me
but your forgiveness for my having been the agent
confusion among your imperial servants. Not only
threatened fate of Achilles Tatius, my benefactor;
Cæsar, whom I think my well-wisher; and even of A
himself, painful, so far as it is of my bringing round; b
I have known it somehow happen that those on whom
Imperial Majesty has lavished the most valuable expr
of your favour one day were the next day fool to fatt
chough and crow. And this, I acknowledge, is a purp
which I would not willingly have it said I had brou
English limbs to these Grecian shores.'

'Call thee by thine own name, my Edward,' said th
peror (while he muttered aside, 'By Heaven, I hav
forgot the name of the barbarian!') – 'by thine own
certainly for the present, but only until we shall devi
more fitted for the trust we repose in thee. Meantime, l
this scroll, which contains, I think, all the particulars
we have been able to learn of this plot, and give it to
unbelieving women, who will not credit that an empero
danger till the blades of the conspirators' poniards are cla
within his ribs.'

Hereward did as he was comm[illegible]ded, and having look
the scroll, and signified, by bending his head, his acquies
in its contents, he presented it to Irene, who had not read
ere, with a countenance so embittered that she had difficul
pointing out [illegible]ause of her displeasure to her daughte
bade her, with animation, 'Read that — read that, and j
of the gratitude and affection of thy Cæsar.'

The Princess Anna Comnena awoke from a state of prof
and overpowering melancholy, and looked at the passage poi
out to her, at first with an air of languid curiosity, which
ently deepened into the most intense interest. She clut
the scroll as a falcon does his prey, her eye lightened
indignation; and it was with the cry of the bird when in
that she exclaimed, 'Bloody-minded, double-hearted trai
what wouldst thou have? Yes, father,' she said, rising in
'it is no longer the voice of a deceived princess that shal
tercede to avert from the traitor Nicephorus the doom he
deserved. Did he think that one born in the purple cham
could be divorced murdered perhaps -with the petty form
of the Romans, "Restore the keys, be no longer my dome

drudge"?[1] Was a daughter of the blood of Comnenus liable to such insults as the meanest of Quirites might bestow on a family housekeeper?'

So saying, she dashed the tears from her eyes, and her countenance, naturally that of beauty and gentleness, became animated with the expression of a fury. Hereward looked at her with a mixture of fear, dislike, and compassion. She again burst forth, for nature, having given her considerable abilities, had lent her at the same time an energy of passion far superior in power to the cold ambition of Irene, or the wily, ambidexter, shuffling policy of the Emperor.

'He shall abye it,' said the Princess — 'he shall dearly abye it! False, smiling, cozening traitor! and for that unfeminine barbarian! Something of this I guessed even at that old fool's banqueting house; and yet if this unworthy Cæsar submits his body to the chance of arms, he is less prudent than I have some reason to believe. Think you he will have the madness to brand us with such open neglect, my father? and will you not invent some mode of ensuring our revenge?'

'Soh!' thought the Emperor, 'this difficulty is over: she will run downhill to her revenge, and will need the snaffle and curb more than the lash. If every jealous dame in Constantinople were to pursue her fury as unrelentingly, our laws should be written, like Draco's, not in ink, but in blood. Attend to me now,' he said aloud, 'my wife, my daughter, and thou, dear Edward, and you shall learn, and you three only, my mode of navigating the vessel of the state through these shoals.

'Let us see distinctly,' continued Alexius, 'the means by which they propose to act, and these shall instruct us how to meet them. A certain number of the Varangians are unhappily seduced, under pretence of wrongs, artfully stirred up by their villainous general. A part of them are studiously to be arranged nigh our person. The traitor Ursel, some of them suppose, is dead; but if it were so, his name is sufficient to draw together his old factionaries. I have a means of satisfying them on that point, on which I shall remain silent for the present. A considerable body of the Immortal Guards have also given way to seduction: they are to be placed to support the handful of treacherous Varangians, who are in the plot to attack our person. Now, a slight change in the stations of the soldiery, which thou, my faithful Edward — or — a — a — whatever thou art named — for which thou, I say, shalt have full

[1] The laconic form of the Roman divorce.

authority, will derange the plans of the traitors, and pla
true men in such position around them as to cut them to
with little trouble.'

'And the combat, my lord?' said the Saxon.

'Thou hadst been no true Varangian hadst thou not in
after that,' said the Emperor, nodding good-humouredly t
him. 'As to the combat, the Cæsar has devised it, a
shall be my care that he shall not retreat from the dan
part of it. He cannot in honour avoid fighting with
woman, strange as the combat is; and however it end
conspiracy will break forth, and as assuredly as it comes a
persons prepared and in arms shall it be stifled in the
of the conspirators.'

'My revenge does not require this,' said the Princess;
your imperial honour is also interested that this countess
be protected.'

'It is little business of mine,' said the Emperor
comes here with her husband altogether uninvited. He
haves with insolence in my presence, and deserves wha
may be the issue to himself or his lady of their mad adven
In sooth, I desired little more than to give him a fright
those animals whom their ignorance judged enchanted, a
give his wife a slight alarm about the impetuosity of a Gre
lover, and there my vengeance should have ended. But it
be that his wife may be taken under my protection, now
little revenge is over.'

'And a paltry revenge it was,' said the Empress, 'that
a man past middle life, and with a wife who might comm
some attention, should constitute yourself the object of al
to such a handsome man as Count Robert, and the amazon
wife.'

'By your favour, dame Irene, no,' said the Emperor.
left that part of the proposed comedy to my son-in law
Cæsar.'

But when the poor emperor had in some measure stopt
floodgate, he effectually opened another, and one which
more formidable. 'The more shame to your imperial wisd
my father!' exclaimed the Princess Anna Comnena; 'it i
shame that, with wisdom and a beard like yours, you sho
be meddling in such indecent follies as admit disturbance i
private families, and that family your own daughter's. W
can say that the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius ever looked ast
towards another woman than his wife till the Emperor taug

him to do so, and involved him in a web of intrigue and treachery, in which he has endangered the life of his father-in-law?'

'Daughter — daughter — daughter!' said the Empress; 'daughter of a she-wolf, I think, to goad her parent at such an unhappy time, when all the leisure he has is too little to defend his life!'

'Peace, I pray you, women both, with your senseless clamours,' answered Alexius, 'and let me at least swim for my life undisturbed with your folly. God knows if I am a man to encourage, I will not say the reality of wrong, but even its mere appearance.'

These words he uttered, crossing himself, with a devout groan. His wife Irene, in the meantime, stept before him, and said, with a bitterness in her looks and accent which only long-concealed nuptial hatred breaking forth at once could convey — 'Alexius, terminate this affair how it will, you have lived a hypocrite, and thou wilt not fail to die one.' So saying, with an air of noble indignation, and carrying her daughter along with her, she swept out of the apartment.

The Emperor looked after her in some confusion. He soon, however, recovered his self-possession, and turning to Hereward, with a look of injured majesty, said, 'Ah! my dear Edward' — for the word had become rooted in his mind instead of the less euphonic name of Hereward — 'thou seest how it is even with the greatest, and that the Emperor, in moments of difficulty, is a subject of misconstruction, as well as the meanest burgess of Constantinople; nevertheless, my trust is so great in thee, Edward, that I would have thee believe that my daughter, Anna Comnena, is not of the temper of her mother, but rather of my own; honouring, thou mayst see, with religious fidelity, the unworthy ties which I hope soon to break, and assort her with other fetters of Cupid which shall be borne more lightly. Edward, my main trust is in thee. Accident presents us with an opportunity, happy of the happiest so it be rightly improved, of having all the traitors before us assembled on one fair field. Think, *then*, on that day, as the Franks say at their tournaments, that fair eyes behold thee. Thou canst not devise a gift within my power but I will gladly load thee with it.'

'It needs not,' said the Varangian, somewhat coldly: 'my highest ambition is to merit the epitaph upon my tomb, "Hereward was faithful." I am about, however, to demand a proof

of your imperial confidence, which, perhaps, you may th
startling one.'

'Indeed!' said the Emperor. 'What, in one word, i
demand?'

'Permission,' replied Hereward, 'to go to the Du
Bouillon's encampment, and entreat his presence in the
to witness this extraordinary combat.'

'That he may return with his crusading madmen,' said
Emperor, 'and sack Constantinople, under pretence of
justice to his confederates? This, Varangian, is at least s
ing thy mind openly.'

'No, by Heavens!' said Hereward, suddenly; 'the Du
Bouillon shall come with no more knights than may
reasonable guard, should treachery be offered to the Cou
of Paris.'

'Well, even in this,' said the Emperor, 'will I be conf
able; and if thou, Edward, betrayest my trust, think that
forfeitest all that my friendship has promised, an' dost i
besides, the damnation that is due to the traitor who bet
with a kiss.'

'For thy reward, noble sir,' answered the Varangian,
hereby renounce all claim to it. When the diadem is
more firmly fixed upon thy brow, and the sceptre in thy h
if I am then alive, if my poor services should deserve so m
I will petition thee for the means of leaving this court,
returning to the distant island in which I was born. M
while, think me not unfaithful, because I have for a time
means of being so with effect. Your Imperial Highness s
learn that Hereward is as true as is your right hand to y
left.' So saying, he took his leave with a profound obeisanc

The Emperor gazed after him with a countenance in wh
doubt was mingled with admiration.

'I have trusted him,' he said, 'with all he asked, and w
the power of ruining me entirely, if such be his purpose.
has but to breathe a whisper, and the whole mad crew
crusaders, kept in humour at the expense of so much curr
falsehood and so much more gold, will return with fire a
sword to burn down Constantinople, and sow with salt
place where it stood. I have done what I had resolved ne
to do: I have ventured kingdom and life on the faith of a m
born of woman. How often have I said, nay, sworn, tha
would not hazard myself on such peril, and yet, step by st
I have done so! I cannot tell — there is in that man's lo

and words a good faith which overwhelms me; and, what is almost incredible, my belief in him has increased in proportion to his showing me how slight my power was over him. I threw, like the wily angler, every bait I could devise, and some of them such as a king would scarcely have disdained. To none of these would he rise; but yet he gorges, I may say, the bare hook, and enters upon my service without a shadow of self-interest. Can this be double-distilled treachery? or can it be what men call disinterestedness? If I thought him false, the moment is not yet past: he has not yet crossed the bridge — he has not passed the guards of the palace, who have no hesitation and know no disobedience. But no; I were then alone in the land, and without a friend or confidant. I hear the sound of the outer gate unclose: the sense of danger certainly renders my ears more acute than usual. It shuts again; the die is cast. He is at liberty; and Alexius Comnenus must stand or fall, according to the uncertain faith of a mercenary Varangian.' He clapt his hands; a slave appeared, of whom he demanded wine. He drank, and his heart was cheered within him. 'I am decided,' he said, 'and will abide with resolution the cast of the throw, for good or for evil.'

So saying, he retired to his apartment, and was not again seen during that night.

CHAPTER XXII

And aye, as if for death, some lonely trumpet peal'd.

CAMPBELL.

THE Varangian, his head agitated with the w
matters which were imposed on him, stopt fro
to time as he journeyed through the mo
streets, to arrest passing ideas as they shot through his
and consider them with accuracy in all their bearings.
thoughts were such as animated or alarmed him alter
each followed by a confused throng of accompaniments w
suggested, and banished again in its turn by reflecti
another description. It was one of those conjunctures
the minds of ordinary men feel themselves unable to sup
burden which is suddenly flung upon them, and when, o
contrary, those of uncommon fortitude, and that be
Heaven's gifts, good sense, founded on presence of min
their talents awakened and regulated for the occasion,
good steed under the management of a rider of courag
experience.

As he stood in one of those fits of reverie which repea
during that night arrested his stern military march, Here
thought that his ear caught the note of a distant tru
This surprised him : a trumpet blown at that late hour, a
the streets of Constantinople, argued something extraordi
for, as all military movements were the subject of special
nance, the etiquette of the night could hardly have been t
gressed without some great cause. The question was,
that cause could be ?

Had the insurrection broken out unexpectedly, and
different manner from what the conspirators proposed to th
selves ? If so, his meeting with his plighted bride, afte
many years' absence, was but a delusive preface to their sepa
ing for ever. Or had the crusaders, a race of men upon w
motions it was difficult to calculate, suddenly taken arms
returned from the opposite shore to surprise the city ?

might very possibly be the case: so numerous had been the different causes of complaint afforded to the crusaders, that, when they were now for the first time assembled into one body, and had heard the stories which they could reciprocally tell concerning the perfidy of the Greeks, nothing was so likely, so natural, even perhaps so justifiable, as that they should study revenge.

But the sound rather resembled a point of war regularly blown than the tumultuous blare of bugle-horns and trumpets, the accompaniments at once and the annunciation of a taken town, in which the horrid circumstances of storm had not yet given place to such stern peace as the victors' weariness of slaughter and rapine allows at length to the wretched inhabitants. Whatever it was, it was necessary that Hereward should learn its purport, and therefore he made his way into a broad street near the barracks, from which the sound seemed to come, to which point, indeed, his way was directed for other reasons.

The inhabitants of that quarter of the town did not appear violently startled by this military signal. The moonlight slept on the street, crossed by the gigantic shadowy towers of Sancta Sophia. No human being appeared in the streets, and such as for an instant looked from their doors or from their lattices seemed to have their curiosity quickly satisfied, for they withdrew their heads, and secured the opening through which they had peeped.

Hereward could not help remembering the traditions which were recounted by the fathers of his tribe, in the deep woods of Hampshire, and which spoke of invisible huntsmen, who were heard to follow with viewless horses and hounds the unseen chase through the depths of the forests of Germany. Such it seemed were the sounds with which these haunted woods were wont to ring while the wild chase was up, and with such apparent terror did the hearers listen to their clamour.

'Fie!' he said, as he suppressed within him a tendency to the same superstitious fears; 'do such childish fancies belong to a man trusted with so much, and from whom so much is expected?' He paced down the street, therefore, with his battle axe over his shoulder, and the first person whom he saw venturing to look out of his door he questioned concerning the cause of this military music at such an unaccustomed hour.

'I cannot tell, so please you, my lord,' said the citizen, unwilling, it appeared, to remain in the open air or to enter

into conversation, and greatly disposed to decline t
questioning. This was the political citizen of Constant
whom we met with at the beginning of this histor
who, hastily stepping into his habitation, eschewed all
conversation.

The wrestler Stephanos showed himself at the next
which was garlanded with oak and ivy leaves, in hon
some recent victory. He stood unshrinking, partly enco
by the consciousness of personal strength, and partly
rugged surliness of temper, which is often mistaken
persons of this kind for real courage. His admirer an
terer, Lysimachus, kept himself ensconced behind his
shoulders.

As Hereward passed, he put the same question as he d
the former citizen — 'Know you the meaning of these tru
sounding so late?'

'You should know best yourself,' answered Steph
doggedly; 'for, to judge by your axe and helmet, the
your trumpets, and not ours, which disturb honest m
their first sleep.'

'Varlet!' answered the Varangian, with an emphasis
made the prizer start; 'but — when that trumpet sounds,
no time for a soldier to punish insolence as it deserves.'

The Greek started back and bolted into his house, n
overthrowing in the speed of his retreat the artist Lysima
who was listening to what passed.

Hereward passed on to the barracks, where the mil
music had seemed to halt; but on the Varangian crossing
threshold of the ample courtyard, it broke forth again w
tremendous burst, whose clangour almost stunned him, th
well accustomed to the sounds. 'What is the meaning of
Engelbrecht?' he said to the Varangian sentinel, who p
axe in hand before the entrance.

'The proclamation of a challenge and combat,' answ
Engelbrecht. 'Strange things toward, comrade: the fra
crusaders have bit the Grecians, and infected them with t
humour of tilting, as they say dogs do each other
madness.'

Hereward made no reply to the sentinel's speech,
pressed forward into a knot of his fellow-soldiers who
assembled in the court, half-armed, or, more properly, in t
disarray, as just arisen from their beds, and huddled aro
the trumpets of their corps, which were drawn out in

pomp. He of the gigantic instrument, whose duty it was to intimate the express commands of the emperor, was not wanting in his place, and the musicians were supported by a band of the Varangians in arms, headed by Achilles Tatius himself. Hereward could also notice on approaching nearer, as his comrades made way for him, that six of the imperial heralds were on duty on this occasion; four of these (two acting at the same time) had already made proclamation, which was to be repeated for the third time by the two last, as was the usual fashion in Constantinople with imperial mandates of great consequence. Achilles Tatius, the moment he saw his confidant, made him a sign, which Hereward understood as conveying a desire to speak with him after the proclamation was over.

The herald, after the flourish of trumpets was finished, commenced in these words:

'By the authority of the resplendent and divine Prince Alexius Comnenus, Emperor of the most holy Roman Empire, his Imperial Majesty desires it to be made known to all and sundry the subjects of his empire, whatever their race of blood may be, or at whatever shrine of divinity they happen to bend — Know ye, therefore, that upon the second day after this is dated, our beloved son-in-law, the much-esteemed Cæsar, hath taken upon him to do battle with our sworn enemy, Robert Count of Paris, on account of his insolent conduct, by presuming publicly to occupy our royal seat, and no less by breaking, in our imperial presence, those curious specimens of art, ornamenting our throne, called by tradition the Lions of Solomon. And that there may not remain a man in Europe who shall dare to say that the Grecians are behind other parts of the world in any of the manly exercises which Christian nations use, the said noble enemies, renouncing all assistance from falsehood, from spells, or from magic, shall debate this quarrel in three courses with grinded spears, and three passages of arms with sharpened swords; the field to be at the judgment of the honourable Emperor, and to be decided at his most gracious and unerring pleasure. And so God show the right!'

Another formidable flourish of the trumpets concluded the ceremony. Achilles then dismissed the attendant troops, as well as the heralds and musicians, to their respective quarters; and having got Hereward close to his side, inquired of him whether he had learned anything of the prisoner, Robert Count of Paris.

'Nothing,' said the Varangian, 'save the tidings your
lamation contains.'

'You think, then,' said Achilles, 'that the Count has
a party to it?'

'He ought to have been so,' answered the Varangian
know no one but himself entitled to take burden for hi
pearance in the lists.'

'Why, look you,' said the Acolyte, 'my most excellent, th
blunt-witted, Hereward, this Cæsar of ours hath had the
travagance to venture his tender wit in comparison to tha
Achilles Tatius. He stands upon his honour too, this inef
fool, and is displeased with the idea of being supposed ei
to challenge a woman or to receive a challenge at her h
He has substituted, therefore, the name of the lord instea
the lady. If the Count fail to appear, the Cæsar walks forw
challenger and successful combatant at a cheap rate, since
one has encountered him, and claims that the lady should
delivered up to him as captive of his dreaded bow and sp
This will be the signal for a general tumult, in which, '
Emperor be not slain on the spot, he will be conveyed to
dungeon of his own Blacquernal, there to endure the doom wh
his cruelty has inflicted upon so many others.'

'But ——' said the Varangian.

'But — but — but,' said his officer — 'but thou art a f
Canst thou not see that this gallant Cæsar is willing to av
the risk of encountering with this lady, while he carnes
desires to be supposed willing to meet her husband? It is
business to fix the combat in such a shape as to bring all w
are prepared for insurrection together in arms to play th
parts. Do thou only see that our trusty friends are plac
near to the Emperor's person, and in such a manner as to ke
from him the officious and meddling portion of guards w
may be disposed to assist him; and whether the Cæsar figh
a combat with lord or lady, or whether there be any combat
all or not, the revolution shall be accomplished, and the Ta
shall replace the Comneni upon the imperial throne of Co
stantinople. Go, my trusty Hereward. Thou wilt not forg
that the signal word of the insurrection is "Ursel," who lives
the affections of the people, although his body, it is said, h
long lain a corpse in the dungeons of the Blacquernal.'

'What was this Ursel,' said Hereward, 'of whom I hear me
talk so variously?'

'A competitor for the crown with Alexius Comnenus — goo

brave, and honest; but overpowered by the cunning, rather than the skill or bravery, of his foe. He died, as I believe, in the Blacquernal; though when or how there are few that c.... say. But, up and be doing, my Hereward! Speak encouragement to the Varangians. Interest whomsoever thou canst to join us. Of the Immortals, as they are called, and of the discontented citizens, enough are prepared to fill up the cry, and follow in the wake of those on whom we must rely as the beginners of the enterprise. No longer shall Alexius's cunning in avoiding popular assemblies avail to protect him: he cannot, with regard to his honour, avoid being present at a combat to be fought beneath his own eye; and Mercury be praised for the eloquence which inspired him, after some hesitation, to determine for the proclamation!'

'You have seen him, then, this evening?' said the Varangian.

'Seen him! Unquestionably,' answered the Acolyte. 'Had I ordered these trumpets to be sounded without his knowledge, the blast had blown the head from my shoulders.'

'I had wellnigh met you at the palace,' said Hereward, while his heart throbbed almost as high as if he had actually had such a dangerous encounter.

'I heard something of it,' said Achilles — 'that you came to take the parting orders of him who now acts the sovereign. Surely, had I seen you there, with that steadfast, open, seemingly honest countenance, cheating the wily Greek by very dint of bluntness, I had not forborne laughing at the contrast between that and the thoughts of thy heart.'

'God alone,' said Hereward, 'knows the thoughts of our hearts; but I take Him to witness that I am faithful to my promise, and will discharge the task entrusted to me.'

'Bravo! mine honest Anglo-Saxon,' said Achilles. 'I pray thee to call my slaves to unarm me; and when thou thyself doffest those weapons of an ordinary lifeguard's-man, tell them they never shall above twice more inclose the limbs of one for whom fate has much more fitting garments in store.'

Hereward dared not entrust his voice with an answer to so critical a speech; he bowed profoundly, and retired to his own quarters in the building.

Upon entering the apartment, he was immediately saluted by the voice of Count Robert, in joyful accents, not suppressed by the fear of making himself heard, though prudence should have made that uppermost in his mind.

'Hast thou heard it, my dear Hereward,' he said — 'hast thou

heard the proclamation, by which this Greek antel
defied me to tilting with grinded spears, and fighti
passages of arms with sharpened swords? Yet there
thing strange, too, that he should not think it safer to
lady to the encounter? He may think, perhaps, t
crusaders would not permit such a battle to be fough
by Our Lady of the Broken Lances! he little knows t
men of the West hold their ladies' character for cou
jealously as they do their own. This whole night have
considering in what armour I shall clothe me, what shift
make for a steed, and whether I shall not honour hi
ciently by using Tranchefer, as my only weapon, aga
whole armour, offensive and defensive.'

'I shall take care, however,' said Hereward, 'that t
better provided in case of need. Thou knowest not the

CHAPTER XXIII

THE Varangian did not leave the Count of Paris until the latter had placed in his hands his signet-ring, *semé*, as the heralds express it, with lances splintered, and bearing the proud motto, 'Mine yet unsheathed.' Provided with this symbol of confidence, it was now his business to take order for communicating the approaching solemnity to the leader of the crusading army, and demanding for him, in the name of Robert of Paris and the Lady Brenhilda, such a detachment of Western cavaliers as might ensure strict observance of honour and honesty in the arrangement of the lists and during the progress of the combat. The duties imposed on Hereward were such as to render it impossible for him to proceed personally to the camp of Godfrey; and though there were many of the Varangians in whose fidelity he could have trusted, he knew of none among those under his immediate command whose intelligence, on so novel an occasion, might be entirely depended on. In this perplexity he strolled, perhaps without well knowing why, to the gardens of Agelastes, where fortune once more produced him an interview with Bertha.

No sooner had Hereward made her aware of his difficulty than the faithful bower-maiden's resolution was taken.

'I see,' said she, 'that the peril of this part of the adventure must rest with me; and wherefore should it not? My mistress, in the bosom of prosperity, offered herself to go forth into the wide world for my sake; I will for hers go to the camp of this Frankish lord. He is an honourable man and a pious Christian, and his followers are faithful pilgrims. A woman can have nothing to fear who goes to such men upon such an errand.'

The Varangian, however, was too well acquainted with the manners of camps to permit the fair Bertha to go alone. He provided, therefore, for her safeguard a trusty old soldier, bound to his person by long kindness and confidence; and

having thoroughly possessed her of the particulars
message she was to deliver, and desired her to be in re
without the inclosure at peep of dawn, returned once
his barracks.

With the earliest light, Hereward was again at th
where he had parted overnight with Bertha, accompan
the honest soldier to whose care he meant to confide h
a short time, he had seen them safely on board of a fer
lying in the harbour, the master of which readily ad
them, after some examination of their license, to pass to S
which was forged in the name of the Acolyte, as authori
that foul conspirator, and which agreed with the appeara
old Osmund and his young charge.

The morning was lovely, and ere long the town of
opened on the view of the travellers, glittering, as now,
variety of architecture, which, though it might be
fantastical, could not be denied the praise of beauty.
buildings rose boldly out of a thick grove of cypresse
other huge trees, the larger, probably, as they were res
for filling the cemeteries and being the guardians
dead.

At the period we mention, another circumstance, m
striking than beautiful, rendered doubly interesting a
which must have been at all times greatly so. A large p
of that miscellaneous army which came to regain the
places of Palestine, and the blessed Sepulchre itself, fro
infidels had established themselves in a camp within a m
thereabouts of Scutari. Although, therefore, the cru
were destitute in a great measure of the use of tents, the
(excepting the pavilions of some leaders of high rank
constructed for themselves temporary huts, not unpleasi
the eye, being decorated with leaves and flowers, while th
pennons and banners that floated over them with va
devices showed that the flower of Europe were assembl
that place. A loud and varied murmur, resembling that
thronged hive, floated from the camp of the crusaders to
neighbouring town of Scutari, and every now and then
deep tone was broken by some shriller sound, the note of
musical instrument, or the treble scream of some chil
female, in fear or in gaiety.

The party at length landed in safety: and as they approa
one of the gates of the camp, there sallied forth a brisk a
of gallant cavaliers, pages, and squires, exercising their mas

horses or their own. From the noise they made, conversing at the very top of their voices, galloping, curvetting, and prancing their palfreys, it seemed as if their early discipline had called them to exercise ere the fumes of last night's revel were thoroughly dissipated by repose. So soon as they saw Bertha and her party, they approached them with cries which marked their country was Italy — '*All erta! all erta! Roba de guadagno, cameradi!*'[1]

They gathered round the Anglo Saxon maiden and her companions, repeating their cries in a manner which made Bertha tremble. Their general demand was, 'What was her business in their camp?'

'I would to the general-in-chief, cavaliers,' answered Bertha, 'having a secret message to his ear.'

'For whose ear?' said a leader of the party, a handsome youth of about eighteen years of age, who seemed either to have a sounder brain than his fellows, or to have overflowed it with less wine. 'Which of our leaders do you come hither to see?' he demanded.

'Godfrey of Bouillon.'

'Indeed!' said the page who had spoken first; 'can nothing of less consequence serve thy turn? Take a look amongst us; young are we all, and reasonably wealthy. My Lord of Bouillon is old, and if he has any sequins, he is not like to lavish them in this way.'

'Still I have a token to Godfrey of Bouillon,' answered Bertha, 'an assured one; and he will little thank any who obstructs my free passage to him;' and therewithal showing a little case, in which the signet of the Count of Paris was inclosed, 'I will trust it in your hands,' she said, 'if you promise not to open it, but to give me free access to the noble leader of the crusaders.'

'I will,' said the youth, 'and if such be the Duke's pleasure, thou shalt be admitted to him.

'Ernest the Apulian, thy dainty Italian wit is caught in a trap,' said one of his companions.

'Thou art an ultramontane fool, Polydore,' returned Ernest; 'there may be more in this than either thy wit or mine is able to fathom. This maiden and one of her attendants wear a dress belonging to the Varangian Imperial Guard. They have perhaps been entrusted with a message from the Emperor, and it is not irreconcilable with Alexius's politics to send it through

[1] That is, 'Take heed! take heed! [illegible] comrades!'

such messengers as these. Let us, therefore, convey t
all honour to the general's tent.'

'With all my heart,' said Polydore. 'A blue-eyed w
a pretty thing, but I like not the sauce of the camp-m
nor his taste in attiring men who give way to temp
Yet, ere I prove a fool like my companion, I would ask
what this pretty maiden is, who comes to put noble
and holy pilgrims in mind that they have in their tin
the follies of men?'

Bertha advanced and whispered in the ear of Ernest.
time joke followed jest, among Polydore and the rest
gay youths, in riotous and ribald succession, which, h
characteristic of the rude speakers, may as well be o
here. Their effect was to shake in some degree the fo
of the Saxon maiden, who had some difficulty in mus
courage to address them. 'As you have mothers, gentl
she said, 'as you have fair sisters, whom you would p
from dishonour with your best blood, as you love and h
those holy places which you are sworn to free from the
enemy, have compassion on me, that you may merit succ
your undertaking!'

'Fear nothing, maiden,' said Ernest, 'I will be you
tector; and you, my comrades, be ruled by me. I have,
your brawling, taken a view, though somewhat agains
promise, of the pledge which she bears, and if she
presents it is affronted or maltreated, be assured Godfr
Bouillon will severely avenge the wrong done her.'

'Nay, comrade, if thou canst warrant us so much,' said
dore, 'I will myself be most anxious to conduct the
woman in honour and safety to Sir Godfrey's tent.'

'The princes,' said Ernest, 'must be nigh meeting the
council. What I have said I will warrant and uphold
hand and life. More I might guess, but I conclude thi
young maiden can speak for herself.'

'Now, Heaven bless thee, gallant squire,' said Bertha,
make thee alike brave and fortunate! Embarrass yourse
farther about me than to deliver me safe to your l
Godfrey.'

'We spend time,' said Ernest, springing from his h
'You are no soft Eastern, fair maid, and I presume you
find yourself unde no difficulty in managing a quiet horse
'Not the least,' said Bertha, as, wrapping herself in

[1] See Crusaders' Punishment. Note D.

cassock, she sprung from the ground, and alighted upon the spirited palfrey as a linnet stoops upon a rose-bush. 'And now, sir, as my business really brooks no delay, I will be indebted to you to show me instantly to the tent of Duke Godfrey of Bouillon.'

By availing herself of this courtesy of the young Apulian, Bertha imprudently separated herself from the old Varangian; but the intentions of the youth were honourable, and he conducted her through the tents and huts to the pavilion of the celebrated general-in-chief of the crusade.

'Here,' he said, 'you must tarry for a space, under the guardianship of my companions (for two or three of the pages had accompanied them, out of curiosity to see the issue), and I will take the commands of the Duke of Bouillon upon the subject.'

To this nothing could be objected, and Bertha had nothing better to do than to admire the outside of the tent, which, in one of Alexius's fits of generosity and munificence, had been presented by the Greek emperor to the chief of the Franks. It was raised upon tall spear-shaped poles, which had the semblance of gold; its curtains were of a thick stuff, manufactured of silk, cotton, and gold thread. The warders who stood round were (at least during the time that the council was held) old grave men, the personal squires of the body, most of them, of the sovereigns who had taken the cross, and who could, therefore, be trusted as a guard over the assembly, without danger of their blabbing what they might overhear. Their appearance was serious and considerate, and they looked like men who had taken upon them the cross, not as an idle adventure of arms, but as a purpose of the most solemn and serious nature. One of these stopt the Italian, and demanded what business authorised him to press forward into the council of the crusaders, who were already taking their seats. The page answered by giving his name, 'Ernest of Otranto, page of Prince Tancred'; and stated that he announced a young woman, who bore a token to the Duke of Bouillon, adding that it was accompanied by a message for his own ear.

Bertha, meantime, laid aside her mantle, or upper garment, and disposed the rest of her dress according to the Anglo-Saxon costume. She had hardly completed this task before the page of Prince Tancred returned, to conduct her into the presence of the council of the crusade. She followed his signal; while the other young men who had accompanied her, wondering at the apparent ease with which she gained admittance, drew back to

a respectful distance from the tent, and there canva
singularity of their morning's adventure.

In the meanwhile, the ambassadress herself ente
council-chamber, exhibiting an agreeable mixture of
facedness and reserve, together with a bold determinati
her duty at all events. There were about fifteen of t
cipal crusaders assembled in council, with their chiefta
frey. He himself was a tall strong man, arrived at tha
of life in which men are supposed to have lost none
resolution, while they have acquired a wisdom and
spection unknown to their earlier years. The counten
Godfrey bespoke both prudence and boldness, and re
his hair, where a few threads of silver were already
with his raven locks.

Tancred, the noblest knight of the Christian chiva
at no great distance from him with Hugh Earl of Vern
generally called the Great Count, the selfish and wily Boh
the powerful Raymond of Provence, and others of the p
crusaders, all more or less completely sheathed in armou

Bertha did not allow her courage to be broken dow
advancing with a timid grace towards Godfrey, she pla
his hands the signet, which had been restored to her
young page, and, after a deep obeisance, spoke these
'Godfrey, Count of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine the
chief of the holy enterprise called the crusade, and y
gallant comrades, peers, and companions, by whatever
you may be honoured, I, an humble maiden of En
daughter of Engelred, originally a franklin of Hampshir
since chieftain of the Foresters, or free Anglo-Saxons,
the command of the celebrated Ederic, do claim what cr
is due to the bearer of the true pledge which I put into
hand, on the part of one not the least considerable of you
body, Count Robert of Paris ——'

'Our most honourable confederate,' said Godfrey, look
the ring. 'Most of you, my lords, must, I think, know
signet — a field sown with the fragments of many spli
lances.' The signet was handed from one of the assem
another, and generally recognised.

When Godfrey had signified so much, the maiden res
her message. 'To all true crusaders, therefore, comrad
Godfrey of Bouillon, and especially to the Duke himself
all, I say, excepting Bohemond of Tarentum, whom he c
unworthy of his notice ——'

'Hah! me unworthy of his notice,' said Bohemond. 'What mean you by that, damsel? But the Count of Paris shall answer it to me.'

'Under your favour, Sir Bohemond,' said Godfrey, 'no. Our articles renounce the sending of challenges among ourselves, and the matter, if not dropt bewixt the parties, must be referred to the voice of this honourable council.'

'I think I guess the business now, my lord,' said Bohemond. 'The Count of Paris is disposed to turn and tear me, because I offered him good counsel on the evening before we left Constantinople, when he neglected to accept or be guided by it——'

'It will be the more easily explained when we have heard his message,' said Godfrey. 'Speak forth Lord Robert of Paris's charge, damsel, that we may take some order with that which now seems a perplexed business.'

Bertha resumed her message; and, having briefly narrated the recent events, thus concluded: 'The battle is to be done to-morrow, about two hours after daybreak, and the Count entreats of the noble Duke of Lorraine that he will permit some fifty of the lances of France to attend the deed of arms, and secure that fair and honourable conduct which he has otherwise some doubts of receiving at the hands of his adversary. Or if any young and gallant knight should, of his own free will, wish to view the said combat, the Count will feel his presence as an honour; always he desires that the name of such knight be numbered carefully with the armed crusaders who shall attend in the lists, and that the whole shall be limited, by Duke Godfrey's own inspection, to fifty lances only, which are enough to obtain the protection required, while more would be considered as a preparation for aggression upon the Grecians, and occasion the revival of disputes which are now happily at rest.'

Bertha had no sooner finished delivering her manifesto, and made with great grace her obeisance to the council, than a sort of whisper took place in the assembly, which soon assumed a more lively tone.

Their solemn vow not to turn their back upon Palestine, now that they had set their hands to the plough, was strongly urged by some of the elder knights of the council, and two or three high prelates, who had by this time entered to take share in the deliberations. The young knights, on the other hand, were fired with indignation on hearing the manner in which

their comrade had been trepanned; and few of the
think of missing a combat in the lists in a country i
such sights were so rare, and where one was to be fo
near them.

Godfrey rested his brow on his hand, and seemed i
perplexity. To break with the Greeks, after having s
so many injuries in order to maintain the advantage of
the peace with them, seemed very impolitic, and a sac
all he had obtained by a long course of painful forbe
towards Alexius Comnenus. On the other hand, he was
as a man of honour to resent the injury offered to Count
of Paris, whose reckless spirit of chivalry made him the
of the army. It was the cause, , of a beautiful lady,
brave one. Every knight in the host would think
bound by his vow to hasten to her defence. When G
spoke, it was to complain of the difficulty of the determi
and the short time there was to consider the case.

'With submission to my Lord Duke of Lorraine,' said
cred, 'I was a knight ere I was a crusader, and took
the vows of chivalry ere I placed this blessed sign up
shoulder: the vow first made must be first discharged.
therefore do penance for neglecting, for a space, the oblig
of the second vow, while I observe that which recalls me
first duty of knighthood — the relief of a distressed lady
hands of men whose conduct towards her, and towards this
in every respect entitles me to call them treacherous faito

'If my kinsman Tancred,' said Bohemond, 'will chec
impetuosity, and you, my lords, will listen, as you have
times deigned to do, to my advice, I think I can direc
how to keep clear of any breach of your oath, and yet fu
relieve our distressed fellow-pilgrims. I see some suspi
looks are cast towards me, which are caused perhaps b
churlish manner in which this violent, and, in this case, al
insane, young warrior has protested against receiving my a
ance. My great offence is the having given him warnin
precept and example, of the treachery which was about
practised against him, and instructed him to use forbear
and temperance My warning he altogether contemned,
example he neglected to follow, and fell into the snare w
was spread, as it were, before his very eyes. Yet the Cou
Paris, in rashly contemning me, has acted only from a te
which misfortune and disappointment have rendered irrati
and frantic. I am so far from bearing him ill-will that,

your lordship's permission, and that of the present council, I will haste to the place of rendezvous with fifty lances, making up the retinue which attends upon each to at least ten men, which will make the stipulated auxiliary force equal to five hundred; and with these I can have little doubt of rescuing the Count and his lady.'

'Nobly proposed,' said the Duke of Bouillon, 'and with a charitable forgiveness of injuries which becomes our Christian expedition. But thou hast forgot the main difficulty, brother Bohemond, that we are sworn never to turn back upon the sacred journey.'

'If we can elude that oath upon the present occasion,' said Bohemond, 'it becomes our duty to do so. Are we such bad horsemen, or are our steeds so awkward, that we cannot rein them back from this to the landing place at Scutari? We can get them on shipboard in the same retrograde manner, and when we arrive in Europe, where our vow binds us no longer, the Count and Countess of Paris are rescued, and our vow remains entire in the chancery of Heaven.'

A general shout arose — 'Long life to the gallant Bohemond! Shame to us if we do not fly to the assistance of so valiant a knight and a lady so lovely, since we can do so without breach of our vow.'

'The question,' said Godfrey, 'appears to me to be eluded rather than solved; yet such evasions have been admitted by the most learned and scrupulous clerks, nor do I hesitate to admit of Bohemond's expedient, any more than if the enemy had attacked our rear, which might have occasioned our countermarching to be a case of absolute necessity.'

Some there were in the assembly, particularly the churchmen, inclined to think that the oath by which the crusaders had solemnly bound themselves ought to be as literally obeyed. But Peter the Hermit, who had a place in the council, and possessed great weight, declared it as his opinion, 'That since the precise observance of their vow would tend to diminish the forces of the crusade, it was in fact unlawful, and should not be kept according to the literal meaning, if, by a fair construction, it could be eluded.'

He offered himself to back the animal which he best rode — that is, his ass; and though he was diverted from showing this example by the remonstrances of Godfrey of Bouillon, who was afraid of his becoming a scandal in the eyes of the [illegible] then, yet he so prevailed by his arguments, that the knights, far from

scrupling to countermarch, eagerly contended which have the honour of making one of the party which retrograde to Constantinople, see the combat, and bri to the host in safety the valorous Count of Paris, of victory no one doubted, and his amazonian countess.

This emulation was also put an end to by the auth Godfrey, who himself selected the fifty knights who compose the party. They were chosen from different and the command of the whole was given to young Tan Otranto. Notwithstanding the claim of Bohemond, detained the latter, under the pretext that his knowl the country and people was absolutely necessary to enal council to form the plan of the campaign in Syria; reality he dreaded the selfishness of a man of great in as well as military skill, who, finding himself in a s command, might be tempted, should opportunities a enlarge his own power and dominion at the expense pious purposes of the crusade in general. The younger the expedition were chiefly anxious to procure such h had been thoroughly trained, and could go through wit and temper the manœuvre of equitation by which designed to render legitimate the movement which th recourse to. The selection was at length made, and the ment ordered to draw up in the rear, or upon the eastwa of the Christian encampment. In the meanwhile, G charged Bertha with a message for the Count of Pa which, slightly censuring him for not observing more c in his intercourse with the Greeks, he informed him t had sent a detachment of fifty lances, with the corresp squires, pages, men-at-arms, and cross-bows, five hund number, commanded by the valiant Tancred, to his assis The Duke also informed him that he had added a suit of a of the best temper Milan could afford, together with a war-horse, which he entreated him to use upon the f battle; for Bertha had not omitted to intimate Count R want of the means of knightly equipment. The hors brought before the pavilion accordingly, completely bar armed in steel, and laden with armour for the knight's Godfrey himself put the bridle into Bertha's hand.

'Thou need'st not fear to trust thyself with this stee is as gentle and docile as he is fleet and brave. Place self on his back, and take heed thou stir not from the s the noble Prince Tancred of Otranto, who will be the fa

defender of a maiden that has this day shown dexterity, courage, and fidelity.'

Bertha bowed low, as her cheeks glowed at praise from one whose talents and worth were in such general esteem as to have raised him to the distinguished situation of leader of a host which numbered in it the bravest and most distinguished captains of Christendom.

'Who are yon two persons?' continued Godfrey, speaking of the companions of Bertha, whom he saw in the distance before the tent.

'The one,' answered the damsel, 'is the master of the ferry-boat which brought me over; and the other an old Varangian who came hither as my protector.'

'As they may come to employ their eyes here, and their tongues on the opposite side,' returned the general of the crusaders, 'I do not think it prudent to let them accompany you. They shall remain here for some short time. The citizens of Scutari will not comprehend for some space what our intention is, and I could wish Prince Tancred and his attendants to be the first to announce their own arrival.

Bertha accordingly intimated the pleasure of the French general to the parties, without naming his motives; when the ferryman began to exclaim on the hardship of intercepting him in his trade, and Osmund to complain of being detained from his duties. But Bertha, by the orders of Godfrey, left them with the assurance that they would be soon at liberty. Finding themselves thus abandoned, each applied himself to his favourite amusement. The ferryman occupied himself in staring about at all that was new; and Osmund, having in the meantime accepted an offer of breakfast from some of the domestics, was presently engaged with a flask of such red wine as would have reconciled him to a worse lot than that which he at present experienced.

The detachment of Tancred, fifty spears and their armed retinue, which amounted fully to five hundred men, after having taken a short and hasty refreshment, were in arms and mounted before the sultry hour of noon. After some manœuvres, of which the Greeks of Scutari, whose curiosity was awakened by the preparations of the detachment, were at a loss to comprehend the purpose, they formed into a single column, having four men in front. When the horses were in this position, the whole riders at once began to rein back. The action was one to which both the cavaliers and their horses

were well accustomed, nor did it at first afford much to the spectators; but when the same retrograde was continued, and the body of crusaders seemed enter the town of Scutari in so extraordinary a fashi idea of the truth began to occupy the citizens. Th length was general, when Tancred and a few other horses were unusually well trained, arrived at the possessed themselves of a galley, into which they horses, and, disregarding all opposition from the officers of the haven, pushed the vessel off from th

Other cavaliers did not accomplish their purpose so the riders, or the horses, were less accustomed to con the constrained pace for such a considerable length of that many of the knights, having retrograded for one hundred yards, thought their vow was sufficiently obse having so far deferred to it, and riding in the ordinary into the town, seized without farther ceremony vessels, which, notwithstanding the orders of the Gr peror, had been allowed to remain on the Asiatic side strait. Some less able horsemen met with various ac for though it was a proverb of the time that nothing bold as a blind horse, yet from this mode of equitation neither horse nor rider saw the way he was going, some were overthrown, others backed upon dangerous obstacle the bones of the cavaliers themselves suffered much mo would have been the case in an ordinary march.

Those horsemen, also, who met with falls incurred the of being slain by the Greeks, had not Godfrey, surmo his religious scruples, despatched a squadron to extricat a task which they performed with great ease. The part of Tancred's followers succeeded in embarking, intended, nor was there more than a score or two amissing. To accomplish their voyage, however, eve Prince of Otranto himself, and most of his followers obliged to betake themselves to the unknightly labours oar. This they found extremely difficult, as well fro state both of the tide and the wind as from the w practice at the exercise. Godfrey in person viewed progress anxiously from a neighbouring height, and per with regret the difficulty which they found in makin way, which was still more increased by the necessity fo keeping in a body, and waiting for the slowest and manned vessels, which considerably detained those that

more expeditious. They made some progress, however; nor had the commander-in-chief the least doubt that before sunset they would safely reach the opposite side of the strait.

He retired at length from his post of observation, having placed a careful sentinel in his stead, with directions to bring him word the instant that the detachment reached the opposite shore. This the soldier could easily discern by the eye, if it was daylight at the time; if, on the contrary, it was night before they could arrive, the Prince of Otranto had orders to show certain lights, which, in case of their meeting resistance from the Greeks, should be arranged in a peculiar manner, so as to indicate danger.

Godfrey then explained to the Greek authorities of Scutari, whom he summoned before him, the necessity there was that he should keep in readiness such vessels as could be procured, with which, in case of need, he was determined to transport a strong division from his army to support those who had gone before. He then rode back to his camp, the confused murmurs of which, rendered more noisy by the various discussions concerning the events of the day, rolled off from the numerous host of the crusaders, and mingled with the hoarse sound of the many-billowed Hellespont.

CHAPTER XXIV

All is prepared : the chambers of the mine
Are cramm'd with the combustible, which, harmless
While yet unkindled as the sable sand,
Needs but a spark to change its nature so
That he, who wakes it from its slumbrous mood,
Dreads scarce the explosion less than he who knows
That 't is his towers which meet its fury.

Anonymous

WHEN the sky is darkened suddenly, and the
phere grows thick and stifling, the lower r
creation entertain the ominous sense of a
tempest. The birds fly to the thickets, the wild cr
retreat to the closest covers which their instinct gives th
habit of frequenting, and domestic animals show their
hension of the approaching thunder-storm by singular
and movements inferring fear and disturbance.

It seems that human nature, when its original hab
cultivated and attended to, possesses, on similar oc
something of that prescient foreboding which announ
approaching tempest to the inferior ranks of creation
cultivation of our intellectual powers goes perhaps too fa
it teaches us entirely to suppress and disregard those
feelings which were originally designed as sentinels by
nature warned us of impending danger.

Something of the kind, however, still remains, and
species of feeling which announces to us sorrowful or al
tidings may be said, like the prophecies of the weird sist
come over us like a sudden cloud.

During the fatal day which was to precede the com
the Cæsar with the Count of Paris, there were current th
the city of Constantinople the most contradictory, and
same time the most terrific, reports. Privy conspiracy,
alleged, was on the very eve of breaking out ; open war,
reported by others, was about to shake her banners ov

devoted city; the precise cause was not agreed upon, any more than the nature of the enemy. Some said that the barbarians from the borders of Thracia, the Hungarians, as they were termed, and the Comani were on their march from the frontiers to surprise the city; another report stated that the Turks, who during this period were established in Asia, had resolved to prevent the threatened attack of the crusaders upon Palestine, by surprising not only the Western pilgrims, but the Christians of the East, by one of their innumerable invasions, executed with their characteristic rapidity.

Another report, approaching more near to the truth, declared that the crusaders themselves, having discovered their various causes of complaint against Alexius Comnenus, had resolved to march back their united forces to the capital, with a view of dethroning or chastising him; and the citizens were dreadfully alarmed for the consequences of the resentment of men so fierce in their habits and so strange in their manners. In short, although they did not all agree on the precise cause of danger, it was yet generally allowed that something of a dreadful kind was impending, which appeared to be in a certain degree confirmed by the motions that were taking place among the troops. The Varangians, as well as the Immortals, were gradually assembled, and placed in occupation of the strongest parts of the city, until at length the fleet of galleys, row-boats, and transports, occupied by Tancred and his party, were observed to put themselves in motion from Scutari, and attempt to gain such a height in the narrow sea as upon the turn of the tide should transport them to the port of the capital.

Alexius Comnenus was himself struck at this unexpected movement on the part of the crusaders. Yet, after some conversation with Hereward, on whom he had determined to repose his confidence, and had now gone too far to retreat, he became reassured, the more especially by the limited size of the detachment which seemed to meditate so bold a measure as an attack upon his capital. To those around him he said, with carelessness, that it was hardly to be supposed that a trumpet could blow to the charge, within hearing of the crusaders' camp, without some out of so many knights coming forth to see the cause and the issue of the conflict.

The conspirators also had their secret fears when the little armament of Tancred had been seen on the straits. Agelastes mounted a mule and went to the shore of the sea, at the place now called Galata. He met Bertha's old ferryman, whom

Godfrey had set at liberty, partly in contempt, and par
the report he was likely to make might serve to am
conspirators in the city. Closely examined by Agela
confessed that the present detachment, so far as he
stood, was despatched at the instance of Bohemond, a
under the command of his kinsman, Tancred, whose well
banner was floating from the headmost vessel. This gav
age to Agelastes, who, in the course of his intrigues, had
a private communication with the wily and ever me
prince of Antioch. The object of the philosopher ha
to obtain from Bohemond a body of his followers to
rate in the intended conspiracy, and fortify the party
surgents. It is true, that Bohemond had returned no
but the account now given by the ferryman, and the s
Tancred the kinsman of Bohemond's banner displayed
straits, satisfied the philosopher that his offers, his p
and his promises had gained to his side the avaricious
and that this band had been selected by Bohemond, an
coming to act in his favour.

As Agelastes turned to go off, he almost jostled a pe
much muffled up, and apparently as unwilling to be kn
the philosopher himself. Alexius Comnenus, however
was the Emperor himself — knew Agelastes, though rathe
his stature and gestures than his countenance, and co
forbear whispering in his ear, as he passed, the well
lines, to which the pretended sage's various acquisition
some degree of point: —

> 'Grammaticus, rhetor, geometres, pictor, aliptes,
> Augur, scheenobates, medicus, magus; omnia novit.
> Græculus esuriens in cœlum, jusseris, ibit.'

Agelastes first started at the unexpected sound of the Emp
voice, yet immediately recovered presence of mind, the w
which had made him suspect himself betrayed; and w
taking notice of the rank of the person to whom he spo
answered by a quotation which should return the alarm l
received. The speech that suggested itself was said to h
which the phantom of Cleonice dinned into the ears
tyrant who murdered her —

> 'Tu cole justitiam; teque atque alios manet ultor.'[1]

The sentence, and the recollections which accompani

[1] See Latin Quotations. Note 10.

thrilled through the heart of the Emperor, who walked on, however, without any notice or reply.

'The vile conspirator,' he said, 'had his associates around him, otherwise he had not hazarded that threat. Or it may have been worse: Agelastes himself, on the very brink of this world, may have obtained that singular glance into futurity proper to that situation, and perhaps speaks less from his own reflection than from a strange spirit of prescience, which dictates his words. Have I then in earnest sinned so far in my imperial duty as to make it just to apply to me the warning used by the injured Cleonice to her ravisher and murderer? Methinks I have not. Methinks that, at less expense than that of a just severity, I could ill have kept my seat in the high place where Heaven has been pleased to seat me, and where, as a ruler, I am bound to maintain my station. Methinks the sum of those who have experienced my clemency may be well numbered with that of such as have sustained the deserved punishments of their guilt. But has that vengeance, however deserved in itself, been always taken in a legal or justifiable manner? My conscience, I doubt, will hardly answer so home a question; and where is the man, had he the virtues of Antoninus himself, that can hold so high and responsible a place, yet sustain such an interrogation as is implied in that sort of warning which I have received from this traitor? *Tu cole justitiam*; we all need to use justice to others. *Teque atque alios manet ultor*; we are all amenable to an avenging being. I will see the Patriarch — instantly will I see him; and by confessing my transgressions to the church, I will, by her plenary indulgence, acquire the right of spending the last day of my reign in a consciousness of innocence, or at least of pardon — a state of mind rarely the lot of those whose lines have fallen in lofty places.'

So saying, he passed to the palace of Zosimus the Patriarch, to whom he could unbosom himself with more safety because he had long considered Agelastes as a private enemy to the church, and a man attached to the ancient doctrines of heathenism. In the councils of the state they were also opposed to each other, nor did the Emperor doubt that, in communicating the secret of the conspiracy to the Patriarch, he was sure to attain a loyal and firm supporter in the defence which he proposed to himself. He therefore gave a signal by a low whistle, and a confidential officer, well mounted, approached him, who attended him in his ride, though unostentatiously, and at some distance.

In this manner, therefore, Alexius Comnenus proceed
the palace of the Patriarch, with as much speed as wa
sistent with his purpose of avoiding to attract any pa
notice as he passed through the street. During the
ride, the warning of Agelastes repeatedly occurred to hi
his conscience reminded him of too many actions of his
which could only be justified by necessity, emphatically s
be the tyrant's plea, and which were of themselves dese
the dire vengeance so long delayed.

When he came in sight of the splendid towers which ad
the front of the patriarchal palace, he turned aside fro
lofty gates, repaired to a narrow court, and again givi
mule to his attendant, he stopt before a postern, whos
arch and humble architrave seemed to exclude the possi
of its leading to any place of importance. On knocking,
ever, a priest of an inferior order opened the door, who, w
deep reverence, received the Emperor so soon as he had
himself known, and conducted him into the interior o
palace. Demanding a secret interview with the Patri
Alexius was then ushered into his private library, where h
received by the aged priest with the deepest respect, w
the nature of his communication soon changed into horro
astonishment.

Although Alexius was supposed by many of his own c
and particularly by some members of his own family, t
little better than a hypocrite in his religious professions
such severe observers were unjust in branding him with a
so odious. He was indeed aware of the great support whi
received from the good opinion of the clergy, and to them
was willing to make sacrifices for the advantage of the ch
or of individual prelates who manifested fidelity to the cr
but though, on the one hand, such sacrifices were rarely
by Alexius without a view to temporal policy, yet, on the o
he regarded them as recommended by his devotional feeli
and took credit to himself for various grants and actions
dictated by sincere piety, which, in another aspect, were
fruits of temporal policy. His mode of looking on these m
ures was that of a person with oblique vision, who sees
object in a different manner according to the point from wh
he chances to contemplate it.

The Emperor placed his own errors of government before
Patriarch in his confession, giving due weight to every bre
of morality as it occurred, and stripping from them the li

ments and palliative circumstances which had in his own imagination lessened their guilt. The Patriarch heard, to his astonishment, the real thread of many a court intrigue, which had borne a very different appearance till the Emperor's narrative either justified his conduct upon the occasion or left it totally unjustifiable. Upon the whole, the balance was certainly more in favour of Alexius than the Patriarch had supposed likely in that more distant view he had taken of the intrigues of the court, when, as usual, the ministers and the courtiers endeavoured to make up for the applause which they had given in council to the most blameable actions of the absolute monarch by elsewhere imputing to his motives greater guilt than really belonged to them. Many men who had fallen sacrifices, it was supposed, to the personal spleen or jealousy of the Emperor, appeared to have been in fact removed from life, or from liberty, because their enjoying either was inconsistent with the quiet of the state and the safety of the monarch.

Zosimus also learned, what he perhaps already suspected, that, amidst the profound silence of despotism which seemed to pervade the Grecian empire, it heaved frequently with convulsive throes, which ever and anon made obvious the existence of a volcano under the surface. Thus, while smaller delinquencies, or avowed discontent with the imperial government, seldom occurred, and were severely punished when they did, the deepest and most mortal conspiracies against the life and the authority of the Emperor were cherished by those nearest to his person; and he was often himself aware of them, though it was not until they approached an explosion that he dared act upon his knowledge and punish the conspirators.

The whole treason of the Cæsar, with his associates, Agelastes and Achilles Tatius, was heard by the Patriarch with wonder and astonishment, and he was particularly surprised at the dexterity with which the Emperor, knowing the existence of so dangerous a conspiracy at home, had been able to parry the danger from the crusaders occurring at the same moment.

'In that respect,' said the Emperor, to whom indeed the churchman hinted his surprise, 'I have been singularly unfortunate. Had I been secure of the forces of my own empire, I might have taken one out of two manly and open courses with these frantic warriors of the West: I might, my reverend father, have devoted the sums paid to Bohemond and other of the more selfish among the crusaders to the honest and open support of the army of Western Christians, and safely trans-

ported them to Palestine, without exposing them to th
loss which they are likely to sustain by the opposition
infidels; their success would have been in fact my own
Latin kingdom in Palestine, defended by its steel-clad w
would have been a safe and inexpugnable barrier of the
against the Saracens. Or, if it was thought more expedi
the protection of the empire and the holy church, over
you are ruler, we might at once, and by open force
defended the frontiers of our states against a host comm
by so many different and discording chiefs, and advancin
us with such equivocal intentions. If the first swarm o
locusts, under him whom they called Walter the Pennile
thinned by the Hungarians, and totally destroyed by the
as the pyramids of bones on the frontiers of the countr
keep in memory, surely the united forces of the Grecian
would have had little difficulty in scattering this
flight, though commanded by these Godfreys, Bohemond
Tancreds.'

The Patriarch was silent, for though he disliked, or
detested, the crusaders, as members of the Latin Church,
thought it highly doubtful that in feats of battle they
have been met and overcome by the Grecian forces.

'At any rate,' said Alexius, rightly interpreting his si
'if vanquished, I had fallen under my shield as a Greek em
should, nor had I been forced into these mean measu
attacking men by stealth, and with forces disguised as inf
while the lives of the faithful soldiers of the empire, who
fallen in obscure skirmishes, had better, both for them an
been lost bravely in their ranks, avowedly fighting for
native emperor and their native country. Now, and as
matter stands, I shall be handed down to posterity as a
tyrant, who engaged his subjects in fatal feuds for the safe
his own obscure life. Patriarch, these crimes rest not wit
but with the rebels whose intrigues compelled me into
courses. What, reverend father, will be my fate here
and in what light shall I descend to posterity, the auth
so many disasters?'

'For futurity,' said the Patriarch, 'your Grace hath co
yourself to the holy church, which hath power to bind an
loose; your means of propitiating her are ample, and I
already indicated such as she may reasonably expect, in co
quence of your repentance and forgiveness.'

'They shall be granted,' replied the Emperor, 'in

fullest extent; nor will I injure you in doubting their effect in the next world. In this present state of existence, however, the favourable opinion of the church may do much for me during this important crisis. If we understand each other, good Zosimus, her doctors and bishops are to thunder in my behalf, nor is my benefit from her pardon to be deferred till the funeral monument closes upon me?'

'Certainly not,' said Zosimus, 'the conditions which I have already stipulated being strictly attended to.'

'And my memory in history,' said Alexius, 'in what manner is that to be preserved?'

'For that,' answered the Patriarch, 'your Imperial Majesty must trust to the filial piety and literary talents of your accomplished daughter, Anna Comnena.'

The Emperor shook his head. 'This unhappy Cæsar,' he said, 'is like to make a quarrel between us; for I shall scarce pardon so ungrateful a rebel as he is because my daughter clings to him with a woman's fondness. Besides, good Zosimus, it is not, I believe, the page of a historian such as my daughter that is most likely to be received without challenge by posterity. Some Procop's, some philosophical slave, starving in a garret, aspires to write the life of an emperor whom he durst not approach; and although the principal merit of his production be that it contains particulars upon the subject which no man durst have promulgated while the prince was living, yet no man hesitates to admit such as true when he has passed from the scene.'

'On that subject,' said Zosimus, 'I can neither afford your Imperial Majesty relief or protection. If, however, your memory is unjustly slandered upon earth, it will be a matter of indifference to your Highness, who will be then, I trust, enjoying a state of beatitude which idle slander cannot assail. The only way, indeed, to avoid it while on this side of time would be to write your Majesty's own memoirs while you are yet in the body; so convinced am I that it is in your power to assign legitimate excuses for those actions of your life which, without your doing so, would seem most worthy of censure.'

'Change we the subject,' said the Emperor; 'and since the danger is imminent, let us take care for the present, and leave future ages to judge for themselves. What circumstance is it, reverend father, in your opinion, which encourages these conspirators to make so audacious an appeal to the populace and the Grecian soldiers?'

'Certainly,' answered the Patriarch, 'the most ir
incident of your Highness's reign was the fate of Urs
submitting, it is said, upon capitulation, for life, lin
liberty, was starved to death by your orders in the du
of the Blacquernal, and whose courage, liberality, an
popular virtues are still fondly remembered by the
of this metropolis, and by the soldiers of the guard
Immortal.'

'And this,' said the Emperor, fixing his eye upon h
fessor, 'your reverence esteems actually the most dan
point of the popular tumult?'

'I cannot doubt,' said the Patriarch, 'that his very
boldly pronounced and artfully repeated, will be the
word, as has been plotted, of a horrible tumult.'

'I thank Heaven!' said the Emperor, 'on that parti
will be on my guard. Good-night to your reverence
believe me that all in this scroll, to which I have set my
shall be with the utmost fidelity accomplished. Be not
ever, over-impatient in this business: such a shower of b
falling at once upon the church would make men susp
that the prelates and ministers proceeded rather as
upon a bargain between the Emperor and Patriarch th
paying or receiving an atonement offered by a sinner in e
of his crimes. This would be injurious, father, both to yo
and me.'

'All regular delay,' said the Patriarch, 'shall be inter
at your Highness's pleasure; and we shall trust to yo
recollection that the bargain, if it could be termed one, w
your own seeking, and that the benefit to the church was
tingent upon the pardon and the support which she has aff
to your Majesty.'

'True,' said the Emperor — 'most true; nor shall I forg
Once more adieu, and forget not what I have told thee.
is a night, Zosimus, in which the Emperor must toil
a slave, if he means not to return to the humble Al
Comnenus, and even then there were no resting-place.'

So saying, he took leave of the Patriarch, who was hi
gratified with the advantages he had obtained for the ch
which many of his predecessors had struggled for in vain
resolved, therefore, to support the staggering Alexius.

CHAPTER XXV

Heaven knows its time; the bullet has its billet,
Arrow and javelin each its destined purpose;
The fated beasts of nature's lower strain
Have each their separate task.

Old Play.

AGELASTES, after crossing the Emperor in the manner we have already described, and after having taken such measures as occurred to him to ensure the success of the conspiracy, returned to the lodge of his garden, where the lady of the Count of Paris still remained, her only companion being an old woman named Vexhelia, the wife of the soldier who accompanied Bertha to the camp of the crusaders, the kind-hearted maiden having stipulated that, during her absence, her mistress was not to be left without an attendant, and that attendant connected with the Varangian Guard. He had been all day playing the part of the ambitious politician, the selfish time-server, the dark and subtle conspirator; and now it seemed, as if to exhaust the catalogue of his various parts in the human drama, he chose to exhibit himself in the character of the wily sophist, and justify, or seem to justify, the arts by which he had risen to wealth and eminence, and hoped even now to arise to royalty itself.

'Fair countess,' he said, 'what occasion is there for your wearing this veil of sadness over a countenance so lovely?'

'Do you suppose me,' said Brenhilda, 'a stock, a stone, or a creature without the feelings of a sensitive being, that I should endure mortification, imprisonment, danger, and distress, without expressing the natural feelings of humanity? Do you imagine that to a lady like me, as free as the unreclaimed falcon, you can offer the insult of captivity, without my being sensible to the disgrace, or incensed against the authors of it? And dost thou think that I will receive consolation at thy hands — at thine — one of the most active arti- ers in this web of treachery in which I am so basely entangled?'

'Not entangled certainly by my means,' answered Agel
'clap your hands, call for what you wish, and the slav
refuses instant obedience had better been unborn. Had
with reference to your safety and your honour, agreed for a
time to be your keeper, that office would have been us
by the Cæsar, whose object you know, and may partly
the modes by which it would be pursued. Why then dos
childishly weep at being held for a short space in an hono
restraint, which the renowned arms of your husband will
ably put an end to long ere to-morrow at noon?'

'Canst thou not comprehend,' said the Countess, 'thou
of many words, but of few honourable thoughts, that a
like mine, which has been trained in the feelings of re
upon my own worth and valour, must be necessarily af
with shame at being obliged to accept, even from the sw
a husband, that safety which I would gladly have owed
to my own?'

'Thou art misled, Countess,' answered the philosopher
thy pride, a failing predominant in woman. Thinkest
there has been no offensive assumption in laying aside
character of a mother and a wife, and adopting that of
those brain-sick female fools who, like the bravoes of the
sex, sacrifice everything that is honourable or useful to a fr
and insane affectation of courage? Believe me, fair lady,
the true system of virtue consists in filling thine own
gracefully in society, breeding up thy children, and delig
those of the other sex; and anything beyond this may
render thee hateful or terrible, but can add nothing to
amiable qualities.'

'Thou pretendest,' said the Countess, 'to be a philosop
methinks thou shouldst know that the fame which hang
chaplet on the tomb of a brave hero or heroine is worth
the petty engagements in which ordinary persons spend
current of their time. One hour of life, crowded to the
with glorious action, and filled with noble risks, is worth w
years of those mean observances of paltry decorum in w
men steal through existence, like sluggish waters throug
marsh, without either honour or observation.'

'Daughter,' said Agelastes, approaching nearer to the l
'it is with pain I see you bewildered in errors which a l
calm reflection might remove. We may flatter ourselves,
human vanity usually does so, that beings infinitely
powerful than those belonging to mere humanity are empl

daily in measuring out the good and evil of this world, the termination of combats, or the fate of empires, according to their own ideas of what is right or wrong, or, more properly, according to what we ourselves conceive to be such. The Greek heathens, renowned for their wisdom and glorious for their actions, explained to men of ordinary minds the supposed existence of Jupiter and his pantheon, where various deities presided over various virtues and vices, and regulated the temporal fortune and future happiness of such as practised them. The more learned and wise of the ancients rejected such the vulgar interpretation, and wisely, although affecting a deference to the public faith, denied before their disciples in private the gross fallacies of Tartarus and Olympus, the vain doctrines concerning the gods themselves, and the extravagant expectations which the vulgar entertained of an immortality supposed to be possessed by creatures who were in every respect mortal, both in the confirmation of their bodies and in the internal belief of their souls. Of these wise and good men some granted the existence of the supposed deities, but denied that they cared about the actions of mankind any more than those of the inferior animals. A merry, jovial, careless life, such as the followers of Epicurus would choose for themselves, was what they assigned for those gods whose being they admitted. Others, more bold or more consistent, entirely denied the existence of deities who apparently had no proper object or purpose, and believed that such of them whose being and attributes were proved to us by no supernatural appearances had in reality no existence whatever.'

'Stop, wretch!' said the Countess, 'and know that thou speakest not to one of those blinded heathens of whose abominable doctrines you are detailing the result. Know that, if an erring, I am nevertheless a sincere, daughter of the church, and this cross displayed on my shoulder is a sufficient emblem of the vows I have undertaken in its cause. Be therefore wary, as thou art wily; for, believe me, if thou scoffest or utterest reproach against my holy religion, what I am unable to answer in language I will reply to, without hesitation, with the point of my dagger.'

'To that argument,' said Agelastes, drawing back from the neighbourhood of Brenhilda, 'believe me, fair lady, I am very unwilling to urge your gentleness. But, although I shall not venture to say anything of those superior and benevolent powers to whom you ascribe the management of th: world, you

will surely not take offence at my noticing those base su
tions which have been adopted in explanation of what is
by the Magi the Evil Principle. Was there ever receiv
a human creed a being so mean almost so ridiculous —
Christian Satan? A goatish figure and limbs, with gro
features, formed to express the most execrable passio
degree of power scarce inferior to that of the Deity;
talent at the same time scarce equal to that of the stu
of the lowest order! What is he, this being, who is at
the second arbiter of the human race, save an immortal
with the petty spleen and spite of a vindictive old man
woman?'

Agelastes made a singular pause in this part of his disc
A mirror of considerable size hung in the apartment, s
the philosopher could see in its reflection the figure of
hilda, and remark the change of her countenance, thoug
had averted her face from him in hatred of the doctrines
he promulgated. On this glass the philosopher had his
naturally fixed, and he was confounded at perceiving a
glide from behind the shadow of a curtain, and glare a
with the supposed mien and expression of the Satan of mo
mythology, or a satyr of the heathen age.

'Man!' said Brenhilda, whose attention was attracte
this extraordinary apparition, as it seemed, of the Fiend,
thy wicked words, and still more wicked thoughts, brough
Devil amongst us? If so, dismiss him instantly, else, by
Lady of the Broken Lances! thou shalt know better th
present what is the temper of a Frankish maiden wh
presence of the Fiend himself, and those who pretend sk
raise him. I wish not to enter into a contest unless
pelled; but if I am obliged to join battle with an enem
horrible, believe me, no one shall say that Brenhilda fe
him.'

Agelastes, after looking with surprise and horror at
figure as reflected in the glass, turned back his head to exa
the substance, of which the reflection was so strange.
object, however, had disappeared behind the curtain, u
which it probably lay hid, and it was after a minute or
that the half-gibing, half-scowling countenance showed i
again in the same position in the mirror.

'By the gods ——!' said Agelastes.

'In whom but now,' said the Countess, 'you profe
unbelief.'

'By the gods!' repeated Agelastes, in part recovering himself, 'it is Sylvan, that singular mockery of humanity, who was said to have been brought from Taprobana. I warrant he also believes in his jolly god Pan, or the veteran Sylvanus. He is to the uninitiated a creature whose appearance is full of terrors, but he shrinks before the philosopher like ignorance before knowledge.' So saying, he with one hand pulled down the curtain, under which the animal had nestled itself when it entered from the garden-window of the pavilion, and with the other, in which he had a staff uplifted, threatened to chastise the creature, with the words 'How now, Sylvanus! what insolence is this? To your place!'

As, in uttering these words, he struck the animal, the blow unluckily lighted upon his wounded hand, and recalled its bitter smart. The wild temper of the creature returned, unsubdued for the moment by any awe of man; uttering a fierce, and at the same time stifled, cry, it flew on the philosopher, and clasped its strong and sinewy arms about his throat with the utmost fury. The old man twisted and struggled to deliver himself from the creature's grasp, but in vain. Sylvan kept hold of his prize, compressed his sinewy arms, and abode by his purpose of not quitting his hold of the philosopher's throat until he had breathed his last. Two more bitter yells, accompanied each with a desperate contortion of the countenance and squeeze of the hands, concluded, in less than five minutes, the dreadful strife.

Agelastes lay dead upon the ground, and his assassin Sylvan, springing from the body as if terrified and alarmed at what he had done, made his escape by the window. The Countess stood in astonishment, not knowing exactly whether she had witnessed a supernatural display of the judgment of Heaven or an instance of its vengeance by mere mortal means. Her new attendant Vexhelia was no less astonished, though her acquaintance with the animal was considerably more intimate.

'Lady,' she said, 'that gigantic creature is an animal of great strength, resembling mankind in form, but huge in its size, and, encouraged by its immense power, sometimes malevolent in its intercourse with mortals. I have heard the Varangians often talk of it as belonging to the imperial museum. It is fitting we remove the body of this unhappy man, and hide it in a plot of shrubbery in the garden. It is not likely that he will be missed to-night, and to-morrow there will be other matter astir, which will probably prevent much inquiry about

him.' The Countess Brenhilda assented, for she was not of those timorous females to whom the countenances o dead are objects of terror.

Trusting to the parole which she had given, Agelastes permitted the Countess and her attendant the freedom o gardens, of that part at least adjacent to the pavilion. therefore were in little risk of interruption as they bore the dead body between them, and without much trouble posed of it in the thickest part of one of the bosquets which the garden was studded.

As they returned to their place of abode or confinement Countess, half speaking to herself, half addressing Vexl said — 'I am sorry for this; not that the infamous wretch not deserve the full punishment of Heaven coming upon hi the very moment of blasphemy and infidelity, but because courage and truth of the unfortunate Brenhilda may be bro into suspicion, as his slaughter took place when he was a with her and her attendant, and as no one was witness of singular manner in which the old blasphemer met his Thou knowest,' she added, addressing herself to Heave 'thou! blessed Lady of the Broken Lances, the protect both of Brenhilda and her husband, well knowest that, w ever faults may be mine, I am free from the slightest suspi of treachery; and into thy hands I put my cause, with a fect reliance upon thy wisdom and bounty to bear evidenc my favour.' So saying, they returned to the lodge unseen, with pious and submissive prayers the Countess closed eventful evening.

CHAPTER XXVI

Will you hear of a Spanish lady,
How she wooed an Englishman?
Garments gay, as rich as may be,
Deck'd with jewels she had on.
Of a comely countenance and grace was she,
And by birth and parentage of high degree.

Old Ballad.

WE left Alexius Comnenus after he had unloaded his conscience in the ears of the Patriarch, and received from him a faithful assurance of the pardon and patronage of the national church. He took leave of the dignitary with some exulting exclamations, so unexplicitly expressed, however, that it was by no means easy to conceive the meaning of what he said. His first inquiry, when he reached the Blacquernal, being for his daughter, he was directed to the room encrusted with beautifully carved marble, from which she herself, and many of her race, derived the proud appellation of *porphyrogenita*, or born in the purple. Her countenance was clouded with anxiety, which, at the sight of her father, broke out into open and uncontrollable grief.

'Daughter,' said the Emperor, with a harshness little common to his manner, and a seriousness which he sternly maintained, instead of sympathising with his daughter's affliction, 'as you would prevent the silly fool with whom you are connected from displaying himself to the public both as an ungrateful monster and a traitor, you will not fail to exhort him, by due submission, to make his petition for pardon, accompanied with a full confession of his crimes, or, by my sceptre and my crown, he shall die the death! Nor will I pardon any who rushes upon his doom in an open tone of defiance, under such a standard of rebellion as my ungrateful son-in-law has hoisted.'

'What can you require of me, father?' said the Princess. 'Can you expect that I am to dip my own hands in the

blood of this unfortunate man; or wilt thou seek a reve
yet more bloody than that which was exacted by the deitie
antiquity upon those criminals who offended against their div
power?'

'Think not so, my daughter,' said the Emperor; 'but rat
believe that thou hast the last opportunity afforded by
filial affection of rescuing, perhaps from death, that silly
thy husband, who has so richly deserved it.'

'My father,' said the Princess, 'God knows it is not at y
risk that I would wish to purchase the life of Nicephorus. I
he has been the father of my children, though they are now
more, and women cannot forget that such a tie has exist
even though it has been broken by fate. Permit me only
hope that the unfortunate culprit shall have an opportunity
retrieving his errors; nor shall it, believe me, be my fault
he resumes those practices, treasonable at once and unnatur
by which his life is at present endangered.'

'Follow me, then, daughter,' said the Emperor, 'and kn
that to thee alone I am about to entrust a secret, upon wh
the safety of my life and crown, as well as the pardon of m
son-in-law's life, will be found eventually to depend.'

He then assumed in haste the garment of a slave a th
seraglio, and commanded his daughter to arrange her dress
a more succinct form, and to take in her hand a lighted lamp

'Whither are we going, my father?' said Anna Comnena.

'It matters not,' replied her father, 'since my destiny calls m
and since thine ordains thee to be my torch-bearer. Believ
it, and record it, if thou darest, in thy book, that Alexi
Comnenus does not, without alarm, descend into those awf
dungeons which his predecessors built for men, even when hi
intentions are innocent and free from harm. Be silent, an
should we meet any inhabitant of those inferior regions, spea
not a word, nor make any observation upon his appearance.'

Passing through the intricate apartments of the palace, the
now came to that large hall through which Hereward had
passed on the first night of his introduction to the place o
Arna's recitation, called the temple of the Muses. It was
constructed, as we have said, of black marble, dimly illumi
nated. At the upper end of the apartment was a small altar
on which was laid some incense, while over the smoke were
suspended, as if projecting from the wall, two imitations of
human hands and arms, which were but imperfectly seen.

At the bottom of this hall, a small iron door led to a narrow

and winding staircase, resembling a draw-well in shape and size, the steps of which were excessively steep, and which the Emperor, after a solemn gesture to his daughter commanding her attendance, began to descend with the imperfect light, and by the narrow and difficult steps by which those who visited the under regions of the Blachernal seemed to bid adieu to the light of day. Door after door they passed in their descent, leading, it was probable, to different ranges of dungeons, from which was obscurely heard the stifled voice of groans and sighs, such as attracted Hereward's attention on a former occasion. The Emperor took no notice of these signs of human misery, and three stories, or ranges of dungeons, had been already passed, ere the father and daughter arrived at the lowest story of the building, the base of which was the solid rock, roughly carved, upon which were erected the side-walls and arches of solid but unpolished marble.

'Here,' said Alexius Comnenus, 'all hope, all expectation takes farewell, at the turn of a hinge or the grating of a lock. Yet shall not this be always the case: the dead shall revive and resume their right, and the disinherited of these regions shall again prefer their claim to inhabit the upper world. If I cannot entreat Heaven to my assistance, be assured, my daughter, that rather than be the poor animal which I have stooped to be thought, and even to be painted in thy history, I would sooner brave every danger of the multitude which now erect themselves betwixt me and safety. Nothing is resolved save that I will live and die an emperor; and thou, Anna, be assured that, if there is power in the beauty or in the talents of which so much has been boasted, that power shall be this evening exercised to the advantage of thy parent from whom it is derived.'

'What is it that you mean, imperial father? Holy Virgin! is this the promise you made me to save the life of the unfortunate Nicephorus?'

'And so I will,' said the Emperor; 'and I am now about that action of benevolence. But think not I will once more warm in my bosom the household snake which had so nearly stung me to death. No, daughter, I have provided for thee a fitting husband, in one who is able to maintain and defend the rights of the Emperor thy father; and beware how thou opposest an obstacle to what is my pleasure! for behold these walls of marble, though unpolished, and recollect it is as possible to die within the marble as to be born there.'

The Princess Anna Comnena was frightened at seein
father in a state of mind entirely different from any whic
had before witnessed. 'O, Heaven! that my mother
here!' she ejaculated, in the terror of something she k
knew what.

'Anna,' said the Emperor, 'your fears and your scream
alike in vain. I am one of those who, on ordinary occa
hardly nourish a wish of my own, and account myself ob
to those who, like my wife and daughter, take care to sa
all the trouble of free judgment. But when the vessel is a
the breakers, and the master is called to the helm, believe
no meaner hand shall be permitted to interfere with him
will the wife and daughter whom he indulged in prosperi
allowed to thwart his will while he can yet call it his
Thou couldst scarcely fail to understand that I was al
prepared to have given thee as a mark of my sincerit
yonder obscure Varangian, without asking question of e
birth or blood. Thou mayst hear when I next promise th
a three years' inhabitant of these vaults, who shall be Cae
Briennius's stead, if I can move him to accept a princes
his bride, and an imperial crown for his inheritance, in pla
a starving dungeon.'

'I tremble at your words, father,' said Anna Comnena. '
canst thou trust a man who has felt thy cruelty? How c
thou dream that aught can ever in sincerity reconcile the
one whom thou hast deprived of his eyesight?'

'Care not for that,' said Alexius; 'he becomes mine, o
shall never know what it is to be again his own. And t
girl, mayst rest assured that, if I will it, thou art next
the bride of my present captive, or thou retirest to the r
severe nunnery, never again to mix with society. Be sil
therefore, and await thy doom, as it shall come, and k
not that thy utmost endeavours can avert the current of
destiny.'

As he concluded this singular dialogue, in which he
assumed a tone to which his daughter was a stranger,
before which she trembled, he passed on through more t
one strictly fastened door, while his daughter, with a fal
ing step, illuminated him on the obscure road. At len
he found admittance by another passage into the cell
which Ursel was confined, and found him reclining in hope
misery, all those expectations having faded from his he
which the Count of Paris had by his indomitable gallan

for a time excited. He turned his sightless eyes towards the place where he heard the moving of bolts and the approach of steps.

'A new feature,' he said, 'in my imprisonment — a man comes with a heavy and determined step, and a woman or a child with one that scarcely presses the floor! Is it my death that you bring? Believe me, that I have lived long enough in these dungeons to bid my doom welcome.'

'It is not thy death, noble Ursel,' said the Emperor, in a voice somewhat disguised. 'Life, liberty, whatever the world has to give, is placed by the Emperor Alexius at the feet of his noble enemy, and he trusts that many years of happiness and power, together with the command of a large share of the empire, will soon obliterate the recollection of the dungeons of the Blacquernal.'

'It cannot be,' said Ursel, with a sigh. 'He upon whose eyes the sun has set even at middle day can have nothing left to hope from the most advantageous change of circumstances.'

'You are not entirely assured of that,' said the Emperor; 'allow us to convince you that what is intended towards you is truly favourable and liberal, and I hope you will be rewarded by finding that there is more possibility of amendment in your case than your first apprehensions are willing to receive. Make an effort, and try whether your eyes are not sensible of the light of the lamp.'

'Do with me,' said Ursel, 'according to your pleasure; I have neither strength to remonstrate nor the force of mind equal to make me set your cruelty at defiance. Of something like light I am sensible; but whether it is reality or illusion I cannot determine. If you are come to deliver me from this living sepulchre, I pray God to requite you; and if, under such deceitful pretence, you mean to take my life, I can only commend my soul to Heaven, and the vengeance due to my death to Him who can behold the darkest places in which injustice can shroud itself.'

So saying, and the revulsion of his spirits rendering him unable to give almost any other signs of existence, Ursel sunk back upon his seat of captivity, and spoke not another word during the time that Alexius disembarrassed him of those chains which had so long hung about him that they almost seemed to make a part of his person.

'This is an affair in which thy aid can scarce be sufficient, Anna,' said the Emperor: 'it would have been well if you and

I could have borne him into the open air by our joint stre
for there is little wisdom in showing the secrets of this p
house to those to whom they are not yet known; neverth
go, my child, and at a short distance from the head o
staircase which we descended thou wilt find Edward, the
and trusty Varangian, who, on your communicating to hi
orders, will come hither and render his assistance; and see
you send also the experienced leech, Douban.'

Terrified, half-stifled, and half-struck with horror, the
yet felt a degree of relief from the somewhat milder to
which her father addressed her. With tottering steps, y
some measure encouraged by the tenor of her instructions
ascended the staircase which yawned upon these inf
dungeons. As she approached the top, a large and s
figure threw its broad shadow between the lamp and the
ing of the hall. Frightened nearly to death at the thoug
becoming the wife of a squalid wretch like Ursel, a mome
weakness seized upon the Princess's mind, and, when she
sidered the melancholy option which her father had pl
before her, she could not but think that the handsome
gallant Varangian, who had already rescued the royal fa
from such imminent danger, was a fitter person with whom
unite herself, if she must needs make a second choice, than
singular and disgusting being whom her father's policy
raked from the bottom of the Blacquernal dungeons.

I will not say of poor Anna Comnena, who was a timid
not an unfeeling woman, that she would have embraced su
proposal, had not the life of her present husband, Nicepho
Briennius, been in extreme danger; and it was obviously
determination of the Emperor that, if he spared him, it sh
be on the sole condition of unloosing his daughter's hand,
binding her to some one of better faith, and possessed
greater desire to prove an affectionate son-in-law. Neither
the plan of adopting the Varangian as a second husband e
decidedly into the mind of the Princess. The present w
moment of danger, in which her rescue to be successful m
be sudden, and perhaps, if once achieved, the lady might h
had an opportunity of freeing herself both from Ursel and
Varangian, without disjoining either of them from her fath
assistance, or of herself losing it. At any rate, the surest me
of safety were to secure, if possible, the young soldier, wh
features and appearance were of a kind which rendered
task no way disagreeable to a beautiful woman. The -che

of conquest are so natural to the fair sex, and the whole idea passed so quickly through Anna Comnena's mind, that, having first entered while the soldier's shadow was interposed between her and the lamp, it had fully occupied her quick imagination, when, with deep reverence and great surprise at her sudden appearance on the ladder of Acheron, the Varangian, advancing, knelt down and lent his arm to the assistance of the fair lady, in order to help her out of the dreary staircase.

'Dearest Hereward,' said the lady, with a degree of intimacy which seemed unusual, 'how much do I rejoice, in this dreadful night, to have fallen under your protection! I have been in places which the spirit of Hell appears to have contrived for the human race.' The alarm of the Princess, the familiarity of a beautiful woman, who, while in mortal fear, seeks refuge, like a frightened dove, in the bosom of the strong and the brave, must be the excuse of Anna Comnena for the tender epithet with which she greeted Hereward; nor, if he had chosen to answer in the same tone, which, faithful as he was, might have proved the case if the meeting had chanced before he saw Bertha, would the daughter of Alexius have been, to say the truth, irreconcilably offended. Exhausted as she was, she suffered herself to repose upon the broad breast and shoulder of the Anglo-Saxon; nor did she make an attempt to recover herself, although the decorum of her sex and station seemed to recommend such an exertion. Hereward was obliged himself to ask her, with the unimpassioned and reverential demeanour of a private soldier to a princess, whether he ought to summon her female attendants, to which she faintly uttered a negative. 'No — no,' said she, 'I have a duty to execute for my father, and I must not summon eye-witnesses; he knows me to be in safety, Hereward, since he knows I am with thee; and if I am a burden to you in my present state of weakness, I shall soon recover, if you will set me down upon the marble steps.'

'Heaven forbid, lady,' said Hereward, 'that I were thus neglectful of your Highness's gracious health! I see your two young ladies, Astarte and Violante, are in quest of you. Permit me to summon them hither, and I will keep watch upon you if you are unable to retire to your chamber, where, methinks, the present disorder of your nerves will be most properly treated.'

'Do as thou wilt, barbarian,' said the Princess, rallying herself, with a certain degree of pique, arising perhaps from her not thinking more *dramatis personæ* were appropriate to the scene than the two who were already upon the stage. Then,

as if for the first time appearing to recollect the messag
which she had been commissioned, she exhorted the Var
to repair instantly to her father.

On such occasions, the slightest circumstances have
effect on the actors. The Anglo-Saxon was sensible th
Princess was somewhat offended, though whether she w
on account of her being actually in Hereward's arms, or wh
the cause of her anger was the being nearly discovered
by the two young maidens, the sentinel did not presu
guess, but departed for the gloomy vaults to join Alexius
the never-failing double-edged axe, the bane of many a
glittering upon his shoulder.

Astarte and her companion had been despatched b
Empress Irene in search of Anna Comnena, through
apartments of the palace which she was wont to inhabit.
daughter of Alexius could nowhere be found, although the
ness on which they were seeking her was described by the
press as of the most pressing nature. Nothing, howeve
a palace passes altogether unespied, so that the Emp
messengers at length received information that their mi
and the Emperor had been seen to descend that gloomy a
to the dungeons which, by allusion to the classical inf
regions, was termed the Pit of Acheron. They came thi
accordingly, and we have related the consequences. Here
thought it necessary to say that her Imperial Highness
swooned upon being suddenly brought into the upper air.
Princess, on the other part, briskly shook off her jun
attendants, and declared herself ready to proceed to
chamber of her mother. The obeisance which she made H
ward at parting had something in it of haughtiness, yet
dently qualified by a look of friendship and regard. As
passed an apartment in which some of the royal slaves we
waiting, she addressed to one of them, an old, respectable
of medical skill, a private and hurried order, desiring hi
go to the assistance of her father, whom he would find at
bottom of the staircase called the Pit of Acheron, and to
his scimitar along with him. To hear, as usual, was to o
and Douban, for that was his name, only replied by that
nificant sign which indicates immediate acquiescence. In
meantime, Anna Comnena herself hastened onward to
mother's apartments, in which she found the Empress alone

'Go hence, maidens,' said Irene, 'and do not let any
have access to these apartments, even if the Emperor him

should command it. Shut the door,' she said, 'Anna Comnena; and if the jealousy of the stronger sex do not allow us the masculine privilege of bolts and bars to secure the insides of our apartments, let us avail ourselves, as quickly as may be, of such opportunities as are permitted us; and remember, Princess, that however implicit your duty to your father, it is yet more so to me, who am of the same sex with thyself, and may truly call thee, even according to the letter, blood of my blood and bone of my bone. Be assured thy father knows not at this moment the feelings of a woman. Neither he nor any man alive can justly conceive the pangs of the heart which beats under a woman's robe. These men, Anna, would tear asunder without scruple the tenderest ties of affection, the whole structure of domestic felicity, in which lie a woman's cares, her joy, her pain, her love, and her despair. Trust, therefore, to me, my daughter, and believe me, I will at once save thy father's crown and thy happiness. The conduct of thy husband has been wrong — most cruelly wrong; but, Anna, he is a man, and in calling him such I lay to his charge, as natural frailties, thoughtless treachery, wanton infidelity, every species of folly and inconsistency to which his race is subject. You ought not, therefore, to think of his faults, unless it be to forgive them.'

'Madam,' said Anna Comnena, 'forgive me if I remind you that you recommend to a princess born in the purple itself a line of conduct which would hardly become the female who carries the pitcher for the needful supply of water to the village well. All who are around me have been taught to pay me the obeisance due to my birth, and while this Nicephorus Briennius crept on his knees to your daughter's hand, which you extended towards him, he was rather receiving the yoke of a mistress than accepting a household alliance with a wife. He has incurred his doom, without a touch even of that temptation which may be pled by lesser culprits in his condition; and if it is the will of my father that he should die, or suffer banishment or imprisonment, for the crime he has committed, it is not the business of Anna Comnena to interfere, she being the most injured among the imperial family, who have in so many and such gross respects the right to complain of his falsehood.'

'Daughter,' replied the Empress, 'so far I agree with you, that the treason of Nicephorus towards your father and myself has been in a great degree unpardonable; nor do I easily see

on what footing, save that of generosity, his life could be
But still you are yourself in different circumstances fro
and may, as an affectionate and fond wife, compare th
macies of your former habits with the bloody change whic
soon to be the consequence and the conclusion of his c
He is possessed of that person and of those features
women most readily recall to their memory, whether al
dead. Think what it will cost you to recollect that the r
executioner received his last salute, that the shapely nec
no better repose than the rough block, that the tongu
sound of which you used to prefer to the choicest instru
of music is silent in the dust!'

Anna, who was not insensible to the personal graces
husband, was much affected by this forcible appeal.
distress me thus, mother?' she replied, in a weeping a
'Did I not feel as acutely as you would have me to do
moment, however awful, would be easily borne. I had
think of him as he is, to contrast his personal qualities
those of the mind, by which they are more than overbala
and resign myself to his deserved fate with unresisting su
sion to my father's will.'

'And that,' said the Empress, 'would be to bind the
his sole fiat, to some obscure wretch, whose habits of po
and intriguing had, by some miserable chance, given
the opportunity of becoming of importance to the Emp
and who is therefore to be rewarded by the hand of
Comnena.'

'Do not think so meanly of me, madam,' said the Prin
'I know, as well as ever Grecian maiden did, how I should
myself from dishonour; and, you may trust me, you
never blush for your daughter.'

'Tell me not that,' said the Empress, 'since I shall
alike for the relentless cruelty which gives up a once bel
husband to an ignominious death, and for the passion
which I want a name, which would replace him by an obs
barbarian from the extremity of Thule, or some wretch esc
from the Blacquernal dungeons.'

The Princess was astonished to perceive that her m
was acquainted with the purposes, even the most private, w
her father had formed for his governance during this e
gency. She was ignorant that Alexius and his royal con
in other respects living together with a decency ever exemp
in people of their rank, had sometimes, on interesting occasi

family debates, in which the husband, provoked by the seeming unbelief of his partner, was tempted to let her guess more of his real purposes than he would have coolly imparted of his own calm choice.

The Princess was affected at the anticipation of the death of her husband, nor could this have been reasonably supposed to be otherwise; but she was still more hurt and affronted by her mother taking it for granted that she designed upon the instant to replace the Cæsar by an uncertain, and at all events an unworthy, successor. Whatever considerations had operated to make Hereward her choice, their effect was lost when the match was placed in this odious and degrading point of view; besides which is to be remembered, that women almost instinctively deny their first thoughts in favour of a suitor, and seldom willingly reveal them, unless time and circumstance concur to favour them. She called Heaven, therefore, passionately to witness, while she repelled the charge.

'Bear witness,' she said, 'Our Lady, Queen of Heaven! bear witness, saints and martyrs all, ye blessed ones, who are, more than ourselves, the guardians of our mental purity! that I know no passion which I dare not avow, and that, if Nicephorus's life depended on my entreaty to God and men, all his injurious acts towards me disregarded and despised, it should be as long as Heaven gave to those servants whom it snatched from the earth without suffering the pangs of mortality.'

'You have sworn boldly,' said the Empress. 'See, Anna Comnena, that you keep your word, for believe me it will be tried.'

'What will be tried, mother?' said the Princess; 'or what have I to do to pronounce the doom of the Cæsar, who is not subject to my power?'

'I will show you,' said the Empress, gravely; and, leading her towards a sort of wardrobe, which formed a closet in the wall, she withdrew a curtain which hung before it, and placed before her her unfortunate husband, Nicephorus Briennius, half-attired, with his sword drawn in his hand. Looking upon him as an enemy, and conscious of some schemes with respect to him which had passed through her mind in the course of these troubles, the Princess screamed faintly, upon perceiving him so near her with a weapon in his hand.

'Be more composed,' said the Empress, 'or this wretched man, if discovered, falls no less a victim to thy idle fears than to thy baneful revenge.'

Nicephorus at this speech seemed to have adopted h
for, dropping the point of his sword, and falling on his
before the Princess, he clasped his hands to entreat for m

'What hast thou to ask from me?' said his wife, na
assured, by her husband's prostration, that the stronge
was upon her own side — 'what hast thou to ask from m
outraged gratitude, betrayed affection, the most solemn
violated, and the fondest ties of nature torn asunder li
spider's broken web, will permit thee to put in words fo
shame?'

'Do not suppose, Anna,' replied the suppliant, 'that I
this eventful period of my life to play the hypocrite, f
purpose of saving the wretched remnant of a dishon
existence. I am but desirous to part in charity with th
make my peace with Heaven, and to nourish the last h
making my way, though burdened with many crimes, to
regions in which alone I can find thy beauty, thy ta
equalled at least, if not excelled.'

'You hear him, daughter?' said Irene. 'His boon
forgiveness alone; thy condition is the more godlike,
thou mayst unite the safety of his life with the pardon
offences.'

'Thou art deceived, mother,' answered Anna. 'It
mine to pardon his guilt, far less to remit his punish
You have taught me to think of myself as future ages
know me; what will they say of me, those future ages,
I am described as the unfeeling daughter who pardone
intended assassin of her father because she saw in him he
unfaithful husband?'

'See there,' said the Cæsar, 'is not that, most serene
press, the very point of despair? and have I not in vain o
my life-blood to wipe out the stain of parricide and ingrati
Have I not also vindicated myself from the most unpardo
part of the accusation, which charged me with attemptin
murder of the godlike emperor? Have I not sworn by all
is sacred to man, that my purpose went no farther tha
sequestrate Alexius for a little time from the fatigues of em
and place him where he should quietly enjoy ease and
quillity; while, at the same time, his empire should
implicitly regulated by himself, his sacred pleasure being t
mitted through me, as in any respect, or at any period, it
ever been?'

'Erring man!' said the Princess, 'hast thou approache

near to the footstool of Alexius Comnenus, and durst thou form so false an estimate of him as to conceive it possible that he would consent to be a mere puppet by whose intervention you might have brought his empire to submission? Know that the blood of Comnenus is not so poor: my father would have resisted the treason in arms, and by the death of thy benefactor only couldst thou have gratified the suggestions of thy criminal ambition.'

'Be such your belief,' said the Cæsar: 'I have said enough for a life which is not and ought not to be dear to me. Call your guards, and let them take the life of the unfortunate Briennius, since it has become hateful to his once beloved Anna Comnena. Be not afraid that any resistance of mine shall render the scene of my apprehension dubious or fatal. Nicephorus Briennius is Cæsar no longer, and he thus throws at the feet of his princess and spouse the only poor means which he has of resisting the just doom which is therefore at her pleasure to pass.'

He cast his sword before the feet of the Princess, while Irene exclaimed, weeping, or seeming to weep, bitterly — 'I have indeed read of such scenes; but could I ever have thought that my own daughter would have been the principal actress in one of them; could I ever have thought that her mind, admired by every one as a palace for the occupation of Apollo and the Muses, should not have had room enough for the humbler but more amiable virtue of feminine charity and compassion, which builds itself a nest in the bosom of the lowest village girl? Do thy gifts, accomplishments, and talents spread hardness as well as polish over thy heart? If so, a hundred times better renounce them all, and retain in their stead those gentle and domestic virtues which are the first honours of the female heart. A woman who is pitiless is a worse monster than one who is unsexed by any other passion.'

'What would you have me do?' said Anna. 'You, mother, ought to know better than I that the life of my father is hardly consistent with the existence of this bold and cruel man. O, I am sure he still meditates his purpose of conspiracy! He that could deceive a woman in the manner he has done me will not relinquish a plan which is founded upon the death of his benefactor.'

'You do me injustice, Anna,' said Briennius, starting up and imprinting a kiss upon her lips ere she was aware. 'By this caress, the last that will pass between us, I swear that, if

in my life I have yielded to folly, I have, notwithsta
never been guilty of a treason of the heart towards a
as superior to the rest of the female world in talen
accomplishments as in personal beauty.'

The Princess, much softened, shook her head as she
— 'Ah, Nicephorus, such were once your words; such, pe
were then your thoughts; but who or what shall no
rant to me the verasity of either?'

'Those very accomplishments and that very beauty
replied Nicephorus.

'And if more is wanting,' said Irene, 'thy mother will
her security for him. Deem her not an insufficient ple
this affair: she is thy mother, and the wife of Alexius
nenus, interested beyond all human beings in the growt
increase of the power and dignity of her husband an
child; and one who sees on this occasion an opportunity
ercising generosity, for soldering up the breaches of the
rial house, and reconstructing the frame of government
a basis which, if there be faith and gratitude in man,
never be again exposed to hazard.'

'To the reality of that faith and gratitude, then,' sai
Princess, 'we must trust implicitly, as it is your will, m
although even my own knowledge of the subject, both th
study and experience of the world, has called me to ob
the rashness of such confidence. But although we two
forgive Nicephorus's errors, the Emperor is still the per
whom the final reference must be had, both as to pardo
favour.'

'Fear not Alexius,' answered her mother; 'he will
determinedly and decidedly, but, if he acts not in the
moment of forming the resolution, it is no more to be
on than an icicle in time of thaw. Do thou apprise
thou canst, what the Emperor is at present doing, and tak
word I will find means to bring him round to our opinion.

'Must I then betray secrets which my father has entr
to me?' said the Princess; 'and to one who has so lately
the character of his avowed enemy?'

'Call it not betray,' said Irene, 'since it is written,
shalt betray no one, least of all thy father, and the fath
the empire. Yet again it is written by the holy Luke,
men shall be betrayed, both by parents and brethren,
kinsfolk, and friends, and therefore surely also by daugh
by which I only mean thou shalt discover to us thy fa

secrets, so far as may enable us to save the life of thy husband. The necessity of the case excuses whatever may be otherwise considered as irregular.'

'Be it so then, mother. Having yielded my consent, perhaps too easily, to snatch this malefactor from my father's justice, I am sensible I must secure his safety by such means as are in my power. I left my father at the bottom of those stairs called the Pit of Acheron, in the cell of a blind man, to whom he gave the name of Ursel.'

'Holy Mary!' exclaimed the Empress, 'thou hast named a name which has been long unspoken in the open air.'

'Has the Emperor's sense of his danger from the living,' said the Cæsar, 'induced him to invoke the dead? for Ursel has been no living man for the space of three years.'

'It matters not,' said Anna Comnena; 'I tell you true. My father even now held conference with a miserable-looking prisoner whom he so named.'

'It is a danger the more,' said the Cæsar: 'he cannot have forgotten the zeal with which I embraced the cause of the present emperor against his own; and so soon as he is at liberty, he will study to avenge it. For this we must endeavour to make some provision, though it increases our difficulties. Sit down then, my gentle, my beneficent mother: and thou, my wife, who hast preferred thy love for an unworthy husband to the suggestions of jealous passion and of headlong revenge, sit down, and let us see in what manner it may be in our power, consistently with your duty to the Emperor, to bring our broken vessel securely into port.'

He employed much natural grace of manner in handing the mother and daughter to their seats; and, taking his place confidentially between them, all were soon engaged in concerting what measures should be taken for the morrow, not forgetting such as should at once have the effect of preserving the Cæsar's life, and at the same time of securing the Grecian empire against the conspiracy of which he had been the chief instigator. Briennius ventured to hint that perhaps the best way would be to suffer the conspiracy to proceed as originally intended, pledging his own faith that the rights of Alexius should be held inviolate during the struggle; but his influence over the Empress and her daughter did not extend to obtaining so great a trust. They plainly protested against permitting him to leave the palace, or taking the least share in the confusion which to-morrow was certain to witness.

'You forget, noble ladies,' said the Cæsar, 'that m
is concerned in meeting the Count of Paris.'

'Pshaw! tell me not of your honour, Briennius,' s
Comnena; 'do I not well know that, although the l
the Western knights be a species of Moloch, a flesh-d
blood-quaffing demon, yet that that which is th
idolatry to the Eastern warriors, though equally loud
in the hall, is far less implacable in the field? B
that I have forgiven great injuries and insults, in orde
such false coin as *honour* in payment. Your ingenuit
poor, if you cannot devise some excuse which will sa
Greeks; and in good sooth, Briennius, to this battl
not, whether for your good or for your ill. Believe m
will consent to your meeting either Count or Countess,
in warlike combat or amorous parley. So you may a
count upon remaining prisoner here until the hour a
for such gross folly be past and over.'

The Cæsar, perhaps, was not in his heart angry
wife's pleasure was so bluntly and resolutely express
the intended combat. 'If,' said he, 'you are determ
take my honour into your own keeping, I am here for t
ent your prisoner, nor have I the means of interferi
your pleasure. When once at liberty, the free exercis
valour and my lance is once more my own.'

'Be it so, sir paladin,' said the Princess, very com
'I have good hope that neither of them will involve y
any of yon daredevils of Paris, whether male or fem
that we will regulate the pitch to which your courage
the estimation of Greek philosophy, and the judgmen
blessed Lady of Mercy, not her of the Broken Lances.'

At this moment, an authoritative knock at the door
the consultation of the Cæsar and the ladies.

CHAPTER XXVII

Physician. Be comforted, good madam; the great rage,
You see, is cured in him; and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more,
Till further settling.

King Lear.

WE left the Emperor Alexius Comnenus at the bottom of a subterranean vault, with a lamp expiring, and having charge of a prisoner who seemed himself nearly reduced to the same extremity. For the first two or three moments he listened after his daughter's retiring footsteps. He grew impatient, and began to long for her return before it was possible she could have traversed the path betwixt him and the summit of these gloomy stairs. A minute or two he endured with patience the absence of the assistance which he had sent her to summon; but strange suspicions began to cross his imagination. Could it be possible? Had she changed her purpose on account of the hard words which he had used towards her? Had she resolved to leave her father to his fate in his hour of utmost need? and was he [illegible] longer upon the assistance which he had implored [illegible]

The short time which the Princess trifled [illegible] gallantry with the Varangian Hereward was magnified [illegible] by the impatience of the Emperor, who began to think that she was gone to fetch the accomplices of the Cæsar to assault their prince in his defenceless condition, and carry into effect their half-disconcerted conspiracy.

After a considerable time, filled up with this feeling of agonizing uncertainty, he began at length, more composedly, to recollect the little chance there was that the Princess would, even for her own sake, resentful as she was in the highest degree of her husband's ill behaviour, join her resources to his, to the destruction of one who had so generally showed himself

an indulgent and affectionate father. When he had
this better mood, a step was heard upon the staire
after a long and unequal descent, Hereward, in hi
armour, at length wholly arrived at the bottom of t
Behind him, panting and trembling, partly with cold a
with terror, came Douban, the slave well skilled in med

'Welcome, good Edward! Welcome, Douban!'
'whose medical skill is sufficiently able to counterbal
weight of years which hang upon him.'

'Your Highness is gracious ——' said Douban; but
would have farther said was cut off by a violent fit of c
the consequence of his age, of his feeble habit, of the
the dungeon, and the rugged exercise of descending
and difficult staircase.

'Thou art unaccustomed to visit thy patients in s
an abode,' said Alexius; 'and, nevertheless, to the d
these dreary regions state necessity obliges us to confi
who are no less our beloved subjects in reality than
in title.'

The medical man continued his cough, perhaps as an
for not giving that answer of assent with which his co
did not easily permit him to reply to an observation
though stated by one who should know the fact, seem
to be in itself altogether likely.

'Yes, my Douban,' said the Emperor, 'in this strong
steel and adamant have we found it necessary to inc
redoubted Ursel, whose fame is spread through the whol
both for military skill, political wisdom, personal brave
other noble gifts, which we have been obliged to obscu
time, in order that we might, at the fittest conjuncture
is now arrived, restore them to the world in their full
Feel his pulse, therefore, Douban; consider him as o
hath suffered severe confinement, with all its privations,
about to be suddenly restored to the full enjoyment of
whatever renders life valuable.'

'I will do my best,' said Douban; 'but your Majest
consider that we work upon a frail and exhausted
whose health seems already wellnigh gone, and may
vanish in an instant, like this pale and trembling light,
precarious condition the life-breath of this unfortunate
seems closely to resemble.'

'Desire, therefore, good Douban, one or two of the
who serve in the interior, and who have repeatedly bee

assistants in such cases — or stay — Edward, thy motions will be more speedy; do thou go for the mutes; make them bring some kind of litter to transport the patient; and, Douban, do thou superintend the whole. Transport him instantly to a suitable apartment, only taking care that it be secret, and let him enjoy the comforts of the bath, and whatever else may tend to restore his feeble animation, keeping in mind that he must, if possible, appear to-morrow in the field.'

'That will be hard,' said Douban, 'after having been, it would appear, subjected to such fare and such usage as his fluctuating pulse intimates but too plainly.'

''T was a mistake of the dungeon keeper, the inhuman villain, who should not go without his reward,' continued the Emperor, 'had not Heaven already bestowed it by the strange means of a sylvan man or native of the woods, who yesterday put to death the jailer who meditated the death of his prisoner. Yes, my dear Douban, a private sentinel of our guards called the Immortal had wellnigh annihilated this flower of our trust, whom for a time we were compelled to immure in secret. Then, indeed, a rude hammer had dashed to pieces an unparalleled brilliant, but the fates have arrested such a misfortune.'

The assistance having arrived, the physician, who seemed more accustomed to act than to speak, directed a bath to be prepared with medicated herbs, and gave it as his opinion that the patient should not be disturbed till to-morrow's sun was high in the heavens. Ursel accordingly was assisted to the bath, which was employed according to the directions of the physician, but without affording any material symptoms of recovery. From thence he was transferred to a cheerful bed-chamber, opening by an ample window to one of the terraces of the palace, which commanded an extensive prospect. These operations were performed upon a frame so extremely stupified by previous suffering, so dead to the usual sensations of existence, that it was not till the sensibility should be gradually restored, by friction of the stiffened limbs and other means, that the leech hoped the mists of the intellect should at length begin to clear away.

Douban readily undertook to obey the commands of the Emperor, and remained by the bed of the patient until the dawn of morning, ready to support nature as far as the skill of leechcraft admitted.

From the mutes, much more accustomed to be the executioners of the Emperor's displeasure than of his humanity,

Douban selected one man of milder mood, and by A
order made him understand that the task in which
engaged was to be kept most strictly secret, while the ha
slave was astonished to find that the attentions paid to
were to be rendered with yet more mystery than the
offices of death and torture.

The passive patient received the various acts of at
which were rendered to him in silence; and if not totall
out consciousness, at least without a distinct comprehen
their object. After the soothing operation of the bat
the voluptuous exchange of the rude and musty pile o
on which he had stretched himself for years for a c
the softest down, Ursel was presented with a sedative d
slightly tinctured with an opiate. The balmy rest
nature came thus invoked, and the captive sunk into a d
slumber long unknown to him, and which seemed to
equally his mental faculties and his bodily frame, wi
features were released from their rigid tenor, and the
of the limbs, no longer disturbed by fits of cramp and
and agonizing twists and throes, seemed changed for a
state of the most perfect ease and tranquillity.

The morn was already colouring the horizon, and the
ness of the breeze of dawn had insinuated itself into th
halls of the Palace of the Blacquernal, when a gentle tap
door of the chamber awakened Douban, who, undisturbe
the calm state of his patient, had indulged himself in
repose. The door opened, and a figure appeared, disgu
the robes worn by an officer of the palace, and co
beneath an artificial beard of great size, and of a white
the features of the Emperor himself. 'Douban,' said A
'how fares it with thy patient, whose safety is this day
consequence to the Grecian state?'

'Well, my lord,' replied the physician — 'excellently
and if he is not now disturbed, I will wager whatever
possess that nature, assisted by the art of the physicia
triumph over the damps and the unwholesome air
impure dungeon. Only be prudent, my lord, and let not
timely haste bring this Ursel forward into the contest ere
arranged the disturbed current of his ideas, and recove
some degree, the spring of his mind and the powers of his
'I will rule my impatience,' said the Emperor, 'or
Douban, I will be ruled by thee. Thinkst thou he is awa
'I am inclined to think so,' said the leech, 'but he

not his eyes, and seems to me as if he absolutely resisted the natural impulse to rouse himself and look around him.'

'Speak to him,' said the Emperor, 'and let us know what is passing in his mind.'

'It is at some risk,' replied the physician, 'but you shall be obeyed. Ursel,' he said, approaching the bed of his blind patient; and then, in a louder tone, he repeated again — 'Ursel — Ursel!'

'Peace — hush!' muttered the patient; 'disturb not the blest in their ecstasy, nor again recall the most miserable of mortals to finish the draught of bitterness which his fate had compelled him to commence.'

'Again — again,' said the Emperor, aside to Douban — 'try him yet again; it is of importance for me to know in what degree he possesses his senses, or in what measure they have disappeared from him.'

'I would not, however,' said the physician, 'be the rash and guilty person who, by an ill-timed urgency, should produce a total alienation of mind, and plunge him back either into absolute lunacy or produce a stupor in which he might remain for a long period.'

'Surely not,' replied the Emperor; 'my commands are those of one Christian to another, nor do I wish them farther obeyed than as they are consistent with the laws of God and man.'

He paused for a moment after this declaration, and yet but few minutes had elapsed ere he again urged the leech to pursue the interrogation of his patient. 'If you hold me not competent,' said Douban, somewhat vain of the trust necessarily reposed in him, 'to judge of the treatment of my patient, your Imperial Highness must take the risk and the trouble upon yourself.'

'Marry, I shall,' said the Emperor, 'for the scruples of leeches are not to be indulged when the fate of kingdoms and the lives of monarchs are placed against them in the scales. Rouse thee, my noble Ursel; hear a voice with which thy ears were once well acquainted welcome thee back to glory and command. Look around thee, and see how the world smiles to welcome thee back from imprisonment to empire.

'Cunning fiend,' said Ursel, 'who usest the most wily baits in order to augment the misery of the wretched! Know, tempter, that I am conscious of the whole trick of the soothing images of last night — thy baths, thy beds, and thy bowers of bliss; but sooner shalt thou be able to bring a smile upon

the cheek of St. Anthony the Eremite than induce me
mine after the fashion of earthly voluptuaries.'

'Try it, foolish man,' insisted the Emperor, 'and t
the evidence of thy senses for the reality of the pleas
which thou art now surrounded; or, if thou art obsti
thy lack of faith, tarry as thou art for a single moment
will bring with me a being so unparalleled in her lo
that a single glance of her were worth the restoration o
eyes, were it only to look upon her for a moment.' So
he left the apartment.

'Traitor,' said Ursel, 'and deceiver of old, bring
hither; and strive not, by shadowy and ideal forms of
to increase the delusion that gilds my prison-house
moment, in order, doubtless, to destroy totally the s
reason, and then exchange this earthly hell for a dung
the infernal regions themselves.'

'His mind is somewhat shattered,' mused the phy
'which is often the consequence of a long solitary confin
I marvel much,' was his farther thought, 'if the Empe
shape out any rational service which this man can rende
after being so long immured in so horrible a dungeon.
thinkest, then,' continued he, addressing the patient, 'th
seeming release of last night, with its baths and refresh
was only a delusive dream, without any reality?'

'Ay — what else?' answered Ursel.

'And that the arousing thyself, as we desire thee
would be but a resigning to a vain temptation, in or
wake to more unhappiness than formerly?'

'Even so,' returned the patient.

'What, then, are thy thoughts of the Emperor, by
command thou sufferest so severe a restraint?'

Perhaps Douban wished he had forborne this questio
in the very moment when he put it, the door of the ch
opened, and the Emperor entered, with his daughter ha
upon his arm, dressed with simplicity, yet with bec
splendour. She had found time, it seems, to change her
for a white robe, which resembled a kind of mourning
chief ornament of which was a diamond chaplet, of inesti
value, which surrounded and bou.d the long sable tresses
reached from her head to her waist. Terrified almost to
she had been surprised by her father in the company
husband the Cæsar and her mother: and the same thund
mandate had at once ordered Briennius, in the character

more than suspected traitor, under the custody of a strong guard of Varangians and commanded her to attend her father to the bedchamber of Ursel, in which she now stood; resolved, however, that she would stick by the sinking fortunes of her husband, even in the last extremity, yet no less determined that she would not rely upon her own entreaties or remonstrances until she should see whether her father's interference was likely to reassume a resolved and positive character. Hastily as the plans of Alexius had been formed, and hastily as they had been disconcerted by accident, there remained no slight chance that he might be forced to come round to the purpose on which his wife and daughter had fixed their heart, the forgiveness, namely, of the guilty Nicephorus Briennius. To his astonishment, and not perhaps greatly to his satisfaction, he heard the patient deeply engaged with the physician in canvassing his own character.

'Think not,' said Ursel in reply to him, 'that, though I am immured in this dungeon, and treated as something worse than an outcast of humanity — and although I am, moreover, deprived of my eyesight, the dearest gift of Heaven — think not, I say, though I suffer all this by the cruel will of Alexius Comnenus, that therefore I hold him to be mine enemy; on the contrary, it is by his means that the blinded and miserable prisoner has been taught to seek a liberty far more unconstrained than this poor earth can afford, and a vision far more clear than any Mount Pisgah on this wretched side of the grave can give us. Shall I therefore account the Emperor among mine enemies — he who has taught me the vanity of earthly things, the nothingness of earthly enjoyments, and the pure hope of a better world, as a certain exchange for the misery of the present? No.'

The Emperor had stood somewhat disconcerted at the beginning of this speech, but hearing it so very unexpectedly terminate, as he was willing to suppose, much in his own favour, he threw himself into an attitude which was partly that of a modest person listening to his own praises, and partly that of a man highly struck with the commendations heaped upon him by a generous adversary.

'My friend,' he said aloud, 'how truly do you read my purpose, when you suppose that the knowledge which men of your disposition can extract from evil was all the experience which I wished you to derive from a captivity protracted by adverse circumstances far — very far beyond my wishes.' Let

me embrace the generous man who knows so well h
construe the purpose of a perplexed but still faithful fr

The patient raised himself in his bed.

'Hold, there,' he said; 'methinks my faculties be
collect themselves. Yes,' he muttered, 'that is the treac
voice which first bid me welcome as a friend, and then
manded fiercely that I should be deprived of the sight
eyes. Increase thy rigour if thou wilt, Comnenus -- add,
canst, to the torture of my confinement; but, since I
see thy hypocritical and inhuman features, spare me, in
the sound of a voice more distressing to mine ear than
than serpents, than whatever nature has most offensiv
disgusting.'

This speech was delivered with so much energy, that
in vain that the Emperor strove to interrupt its tenor, alt
he himself, as well as Douban and his daughter, heard a
deal more of the language of unadorned and natural p
than he had counted upon.

'Raise thy head, rash man,' he said, 'and charm
tongue, ere it proceed in a strain which may cost thee
Look at me, and see if I have not reserved a reward e
of atoning for all the evil which thy folly may charge
account.'

Hitherto the prisoner had remained with his eyes
nately shut, regarding the imperfect recollection he h
sights which had been before his eyes the foregoing even
the mere suggestion of a deluded imagination, if not ac
presented by some seducing spirit. But now, when his
fairly encountered the stately figure of the Emperor, an
graceful form of his lovely daughter, painted in the
rays of the morning dawn, he ejaculated faintly, 'I se
see!' and with that ejaculation fell back on the pillow
swoon, which instantly found employment for Douban an
restoratives.

'A most wonderful cure indeed!' exclaimed the phy
'and the height of my wishes would be to possess such an
miraculous restorative.'

'Fool!' said the Emperor; 'canst thou not conceive
what has never been taken away is restored with little
culty? He was made,' he said, lowering his voice, 'to und
a painful operation, which led him to believe that the
of sight were destroyed; and as light scarcely ever
him, and when it did, only in doubtful and almost

glimmerings, the prevailing darkness, both physical and mental, that surrounded him prevented him from being sensible of the existence of that precious faculty, of which he imagined himself bereft. Perhaps thou wilt ask my reason for inflicting upon him so strange a deception? Simply it was that, being by it conceived incapable of reigning, his memory might pass out of the minds of the public, while at the same time, I reserved his eyesight, that, in case occasion should call, it might be in my power once more to liberate him from his dungeon, and employ, as I now propose to do, his courage and talents in the service of the empire, to counterbalance those of other conspirators.'

'And can your Imperial Highness,' said Douban, 'hope that you have acquired this man's duty and affection by the conduct you have observed to him?'

'I cannot tell,' answered the Emperor; 'that must be as futurity shall determine. All I know is, that it is no fault of mine if Ursel does not reckon freedom and a long course of empire — perhaps sanctioned by an alliance with our own blood — and the continued enjoyment of the precious organs of eyesight, of which a less scrupulous man would have deprived him, against a maimed and darkened existence.'

'Since such is your Highness's opinion and resolution,' said Douban, 'it is for me to aid and not to counteract it. Permit me, therefore, to pray your Highness and the Princess to withdraw, that I may use such remedies as may confirm a mind which has been so strangely shaken, and restore to him fully the use of those eyes of which he has been so long deprived.'

'I am content, Douban,' said the Emperor; 'but take notice, Ursel is not totally at liberty until he has expressed the resolution to become actually mine. It may behove both him and thee to know that, although there is no purpose of remitting him to the dungeons of the Blacquernal Palace, yet if he, or any on his part, should aspire to head a party in these feverish times, by the honour of a gentleman, to swear a Frankish oath, he shall find that he is not out of the reach of the battle-axes of my Varangians. I trust to thee to communicate this fact, which concerns alike him and all who have interest in his fortunes. Come, daughter, we will withdraw, and leave the leech with his patient. Take notice, Douban, it is of importance that you acquaint me the very first moment when the patient can hold rational communication with me.'

Alexius and his accomplished daughter departed accordingly

CHAPTER XXVIII

Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Bears yet a precious jewel in its head.

As You Like It.

FROM a terraced roof of the Blacquernal Palace, a
by a sash door, which opened from the bedcha
Ursel, there was commanded one of the most lo
striking views which the romantic neighbourhood of
tinople afforded.

After suffering him to repose and rest his agitated f
it was to this place that the physician led his patie
when somewhat composed, he had of himself requeste
permitted to verify the truth of his restored eyesight b
ing out once more upon the majestic face of nature.

On the one hand, the scene which he beheld was a
piece of human art. The proud city, ornamented with
buildings, as became the capital of the world, showed
cession of glittering spires and orders of architecture, s
them chaste and simple, like those the capitals of whic
borrowed from baskets-full of acanthus; some deriv
fluting of their shafts from the props made originally
port the lances of the earlier Greeks — forms simple, ye
graceful in their simplicity than any which human in
has been able since to invent. With the most splendid
mens which ancient art could afford of those strictly c
models were associated those of a later age, where more
taste had endeavoured at improvement, and, by mixi
various orders, had produced such as were either compo
totally out of rule. The size of the buildings in whic
were displayed, however, procured them respect; nor
even the most perfect judge of architecture avoid being
by the grandeur of their extent and effect, although h
the incorrectness of the taste in which they were exe
Arches of triumph, towers, obelisks, and spires, design

various purposes, rose up into the air in confused magnificence; while the lower view was filled by the streets of the city, the domestic habitations forming long narrow alleys, on either side of which the houses arose to various and unequal heights, but, being generally finished with terraced coverings, thickset with plants and flowers, and fountains, had, when seen from an eminence, a more noble and interesting aspect than is ever afforded by the sloping and uniform roofs of streets in the capitals of the north of Europe.

It has taken us some time to give in words the idea which was at a single glance conveyed to Ursel, and affected him at first with great pain. His eyeballs had been long strangers to that daily exercise which teaches us the habit of correcting the scenes as they appear to our sight, by the knowledge which we derive from the use of our other senses. His idea of distance was so confused that it seemed as if all the spires, turrets, and minarets which he beheld were crowded forward upon his eyeballs, and almost touching them. With a shriek of horror, Ursel turned himself to the further side, and cast his eyes upon a different scene. Here also he saw towers, steeples and turrets, but they were those of the churches and public buildings beneath his feet, reflected from the dazzling piece of water which formed the harbour of Constantinople, and which, from the abundance of wealth which it transported to the city, was well termed the Golden Horn. In one place, this superb basin was lined with quays, where stately dromonds and argosies unloaded their wealth; while, by the shore of the haven, galleys, feluccas, and other small craft idly flapped the singularly shaped and snow-white pinions which served them for sails. In other places, the Golden Horn lay shrouded in a verdant mantle of trees, where the private gardens of wealthy or distinguished individuals, or places of public recreation, shot down upon and were bounded by the glassy waters.

On the Bosphorus, which might be seen in the distance, the little fleet of Tancred was lying in the same station they had gained during the night, which was fitted to command the opposite landing; this their general had preferred to a mid night descent upon Constantinople, not knowing whether, so coming, they might be received as friends or enemies. This delay, however, had given the Greeks an opportunity, either by the orders of Alexius or the equally powerful mandates of some of the conspirators, to tow six ships of war, full of armed men, and provided with the maritime offensive weapons peculiar

to the Greeks at that period, which they had moored
exactly to cover the place where the troops of Tancred
necessarily land.

This preparation gave some surprise to the valiant Ta
who did not know that such vessels had arrived in the ha
from Lemnos on the preceding night. The undaunted co
of that prince was, however, in no respect to be shaken b
degree of unexpected danger with which his adventure
appeared to be attended.

This splendid view, from the description of which we
in some degree digressed, was seen by the physician and
from a terrace the loftiest almost on the Palace of
Blachernal. To the cityward, it was bounded by a solid
of considerable height, giving a resting-place for the roof
lower building, which, sloping outward, broke to the view
va height, unobscured otherwise save by a high and r
balustrade, composed of bronze, which, to the havenward,
sheer down upon an uninterrupted precipice.

No sooner, therefore, had Ursel turned his eyes that
than, though placed far from the brink of the terrace, h
claimed, with a shriek, 'Save me — save me, if you are
indeed the destined executors of the Emperor's will.'

'We are indeed such,' said Douban, 'to save and if pos
to bring you to complete recovery; but by no means to do
injury, or to suffer it to be offered by others.'

'Guard me then from myself,' said Ursel, 'and save
from the reeling and insane desire which I feel to plunge
self into the abyss to the edge of which you have guided m

'Such a giddy and dangerous temptation is,' said the p
cian, 'common to those who have not for a long time lo
down from precipitous heights, and are suddenly brough
them. Nature, however bounteous, hath not provided
the cessation of our faculties for years and for their su
resumption in full strength and vigour. An interval, lo
or shorter, must needs intervene. Can you not believe
terrace a safe station while you have my support and tha
this faithful slave?'

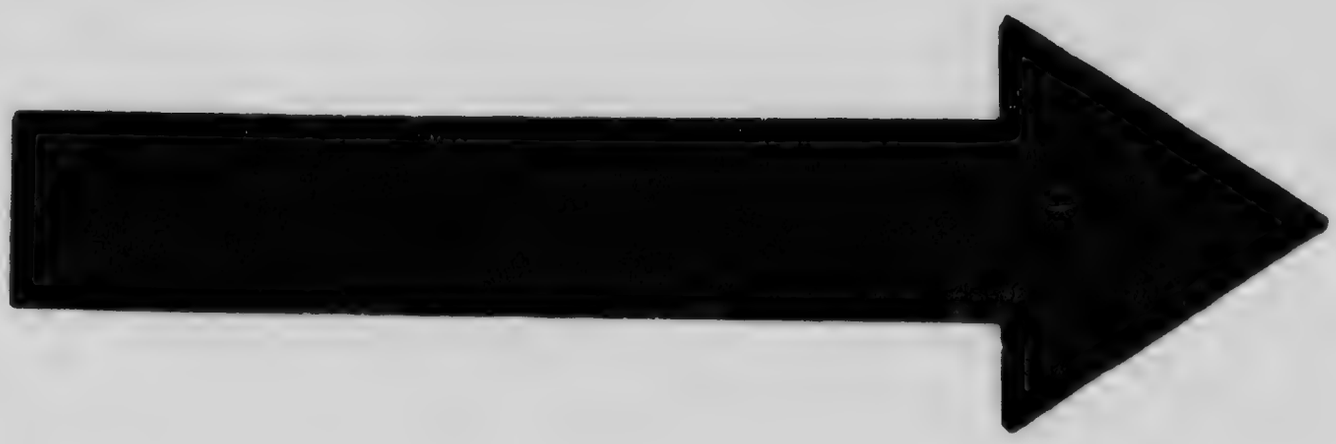
'Certainly,' said Ursel; 'but permit me to turn my
towards this stone wall, for I cannot bear to look at the fl
piece of wire which is the only battlement of defence
interposes betwixt me and the precipice.' He spoke of
bronze balustrade, six feet high, and massive in propor
Thus saying, and holding fast by the physician's arm, h

though himself a younger and more able man, trembled, and moved his feet as slowly as if made of lead, until he reached the sashed door, where stood a kind of balcony-seat, in which he placed himself. 'Here,' he said, 'will I remain.'

'And here,' said Douban, 'will I make the communication of the Emperor, which it is necessary you should be prepared to reply to. It places you, you will observe, at your own disposal for liberty or captivity, but it conditions for your resigning that sweet but sinful morsel termed revenge, which, I must not conceal from you, chance appears willing to put into your hand. You know the degree of rivalry in which you have been held by the Emperor, and you know the measure of evil you have sustained at his hand. The question is, Can you forgive what has taken place?'

'Let me wrap my head round with my mantle,' said Ursel, 'to dispel this dizziness which still oppresses my poor brain, and as soon as the power of recollection is granted to me, you shall know my sentiments.'

He sunk upon the seat, muffled in the way which he described, and after a few minutes' reflection, with a trepidation which argued the patient still to be under the nervous feeling of extreme horror mixed with terror, he addressed Douban thus—'The operation of wrong and cruelty, in the moment when they are first inflicted, excites, of course, the utmost resentment of the sufferer; nor is there, perhaps, a passion which lives so long in his bosom as the natural desire of revenge. If, then, during the first month, when I lay stretched upon my bed of want and misery, you had offered me an opportunity of revenge upon my cruel oppressor, the remnant of miserable life which remained to me should have been willingly bestowed to purchase it. But a suffering of weeks, or even months, must not be compared in effect with that of years. For a short space of endurance, the body, as well as the mind, retains that vigorous habit which holds the prisoner still connected with life, and teaches him to thrill at the long-forgotten chain of hopes, of wishes, of disappointments, and mortifications which affected his former existence. But the wounds become callous as they harden, and other and better feelings occupy their place, while they gradually die away in forgetfulness. The enjoyments, the amusements of this world occupy no part of his time upon whom the gates of despair have once closed. I tell thee, my kind physician, that for a season, in an insane attempt to effect my liberty, I cut through a large portion of



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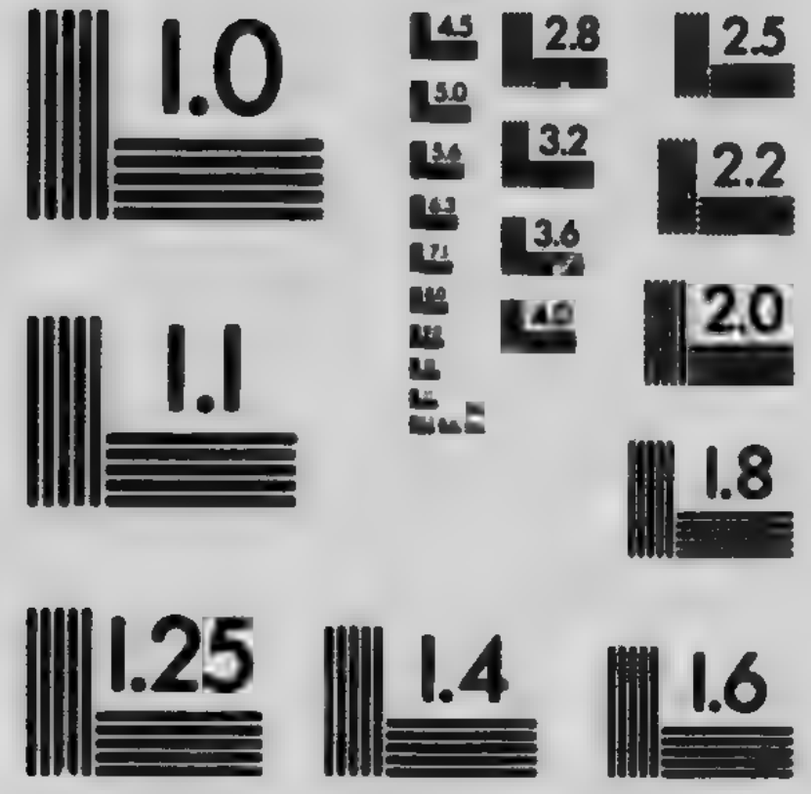

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the living rock. But Heaven cured me of so foolish an idea and if I did not actually come to love Alexius Comnenus — f how could that have been a possible effect in any rational stat of my intellects? — yet, as I became convinced of my own crime sins, and follies, the more and more I was also persuaded tha Alexius was but the agent through whom Heaven exercise a dearly-purchased right of punishing me for my manifol offences and transgressions; and that it was not therefore upo the Emperor that my resentment ought to visit itself. And can now say to thee that, so far as a man who has undergon so dreadful a change can be supposed to know his own mind, feel no desire either to rival Alexius in a race for empire or t avail myself of any of the various proffers which he proposes t me as the price of withdrawing my claim. Let him keep un purchased the crown, for which he has paid, in my opinion, a price which it is not worth.'

'This is extraordinary stoicism, noble Ursel,' answered the physician Douban. 'Am I then to understand that you reject the fair offers of Alexius, and desire, instead of all which he is willing, nay, anxious, to bestow, to be committed safely back to thy old blinded dungeon in the Blacquernal, that you may continue at ease those pietistic meditations which have already conducted thee to so extravagant a conclusion?'

'Physician,' said Ursel, while a shuddering fit that affected his whole body testified his alarm at the alternative proposed, 'one would imagine thine own profession might have taught thee that no mere mortal man, unless predestined to be a glorified saint, could ever prefer darkness to the light of day blindness itself to the enjoyment of the power of sight, the pangs of starving to competent sustenance, or the damps of a dungeon to the free air of God's creation. No! it may be virtue to do so, but to such a pitch mine does not soar. All I require of the Emperor for standing by him with all the power my name can give him at this crisis is, that he will provide for my reception as a monk in some of those pleasant and well-endowed seminaries of piety to which his devotion, or his fears, have given rise. Let me not be again the object of his suspicion, the operation of which is more dreadful than that of being the object of his hate. Forgotten by power, as I have myself lost the remembrance of those that wielded it, let me find my way to the grave, unnoticed, unconstrained, at liberty, in possession of my dim and disused organs of sight, and, above all, at peace.'

'If such be thy serious and earnest wish, noble Ursel,' said the physician, 'I myself have no hesitation to warrant to thee the full accomplishment of thy religious and moderate desires. But, bethink thee, thou art o' e more an inhabitant of the court, in which thou mayst obtain what thou wilt to-day, while to-morrow, shouldst thou regret thy indifference, it may be thy utmost entreaty will not suffice to gain for thee the slightest extension of thy present conditions.'

'Be it so,' said Ursel; 'I will then stipulate for another condition, which indeed has only reference to this day. I will solicit his Imperial Majesty, with all humility, to spare me the pain of a personal treaty between himself and me, and that he will be satisfied with the solemn assurance that I am most willing to do in his favour all that he is desirous of dictating; while, on the other hand, I desire only the execution of those moderate conditions of my future aliment which I have already told thee at length.'

'But wherefore,' said Douban, 'shouldst thou be afraid of announcing to the Emperor thy disposition to an agreement which cannot be esteemed otherwise than extremely moderate on thy part? Indeed, I fear the Emperor will insist on a brief personal conference.'

'I am not ashamed,' said Ursel, 'to confess the truth. It is true that I have, or think I have, renounced what the Scripture calls the pride of life; but the old Adam still lives within us, and maintains against the better part of our nature an inextinguishable quarrel, easy to be aroused from its slumber, but as difficult to be again couched in peace. While last night I but half understood that mine enemy was in my presence, and while my faculties pe formed but half their duty in recalling his deceitful and hated accents, did not my heart throb in my bosom with all the agitation of a taken bird, and shall I again have to enter into a personal treaty with the man who, be his general conduct what it may, has been the constant and unprovoked cause of my unequalled misery? Douban, no! to listen to his voice again were to hear an alarm sounded to every violent and vindictive passion of my heart; and though, may Heaven so help me as my intentions towards him are upright, yet it is impossible for me to listen to his professions with a chance of safety either to him or to myself.'

'If you be so minded,' replied Douban, 'I shall only repeat to him your stipulation, and you must swear to him that you will strictly observe it. Without this being done, it must be

difficult, or perhaps impossible, to settle the league of which both are desirous.'

'Amen!' said Ursel; 'and as I am pure in my purpose, and resolved to keep it to the uttermost, so may Heaven guard me from the influence of precipitate revenge, ancient grudge, or new quarrel!'

An authoritative knock at the door of the sleeping-chamber was now heard, and Ursel, relieved by more powerful feelings from the giddiness of which he had complained, walked firmly into the bedroom, and, seating himself, waited with averted eyes the entrance of the person who demanded admittance, and who proved to be no other than Alexius Comnenus.

The Emperor appeared at the door in a warlike dress, suited for the decoration of a prince who was to witness a combat in the lists fought out before him.

'Sage Douban,' he said, 'has our esteemed prisoner, Ursel, made his choice between our peace and enmity?'

'He hath, my lord,' replied the physician, 'embraced the lot of that happy portion of mankind whose hearts and lives are devoted to the service of your Majesty's government.'

'He will then this day,' continued the Emperor, 'render me the office of putting down all those who may pretend to abet insurrection in his name, and under pretext of his wrongs?'

'He will, my lord,' replied the physician, 'act to the fullest the part which you require.'

'And in what way,' said the Emperor, adopting his most gracious tone of voice, 'would our faithful Ursel desire that services like these, rendered in the hour of extreme need, should be acknowledged by the Emperor?'

'Simply,' answered Douban, 'by saying nothing upon the subject. He desires only that all jealousies between you and him may be henceforth forgotten, and that he may be admitted into one of your Highness's monastic institutions, with leave to dedicate the rest of his life to the worship of Heaven and its saints.'

'Hath he persuaded thee of this, Douban?' said the Emperor, in a low and altered voice. 'By Heaven! when I consider from what prison he was brought, and in what guise he inhabited it, I cannot believe in this gall-less disposition. He must at least speak to me himself, ere I can believe, in some degree, the transformation of the fiery Ursel into a being so little capable of feeling the ordinary impulses of mankind.'

'Hear me, Alexius Comnenus,' said the prisoner; 'and so

may thine own prayers to Heaven find access and acceptation, as thou believest the words which I speak to thee in simplicity of heart. If thine empire of Greece were made of coined gold, it would hold out no bait for my acceptance; nor, I thank Heaven, have even the injuries I have experienced at thy hand, cruel and extensive as they have been, impressed upon me the slightest desire of requiting treachery with treachery. Think of me as thou wilt, so thou seek'st not again to exchange words with me; and believe me that, when thou hast put me under the most rigid of thy ecclesiastical foundations, the discipline, the fare, and the vigils will be far superior to the existence falling to the share of those whom the king delights to honour, and who therefore must afford the king their society whenever they are summoned to do so.'

'It is hardly for me,' said the physician, 'to interpose in so high a matter; yet, as trusted both by the noble Ursel and by his Highness the Emperor, I have made a brief abstract of these short conditions to be kept by the high parties towards each other, *sub crimine falsi*.'

The Emperor protracted the intercourse with Ursel until he more fully explained to him the occasion which he should have that very day for his services. When they parted, Alexius, with a great show of affection, embraced his late prisoner, while it required all the self-command and stoicism of Ursel to avoid expressing in plain terms the extent to which he abhorred the person who thus caressed him.

CHAPTER XXIX

O, conspiracy!
Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O, then, by day,
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy:
Hide it in smiles and affability;
For if thou path, thy native semblance on,
Not Erebus itself were dim enough
To hide thee from prevention.

Julius Cæsar

THE important morning at last arrived on which, by the imperial proclamation, the combat between the Cæsar and Robert Count of Paris was appointed to take place. This was a circumstance in a great measure foreign to the Grecian manners, and to which, therefore, the people annexed different ideas from those which were associated with the same solemn decision of God, as the Latins called it, by the Western nations. The consequence was a vague but excessive agitation among the people, who connected the extraordinary strife which they were to witness with the various causes which had been whispered abroad as likely to give occasion to some general insurrection of a great and terrible nature.

By the imperial order, regular lists had been prepared for the combat, with opposite gates, or entrances, as was usual, for the admittance of the two champions; and it was understood that the appeal was to be made to the Divinity by each, according to the forms prescribed by the church of which the combatants were respectively members. The situation of these lists was on the side of the shore adjoining on the west to the continent. At no great distance, the walls of the city were seen, of various architecture, composed of lime and of stone, and furnished with no less than four-and-twenty gates, or posterns, five of which regarded the land and nineteen

the water. All this formed a beautiful prospect, much of which is still visible. The town itself is about nineteen miles in circumference; and as it is on all sides surrounded with lofty cypresses, its general appearance is that of a city arising out of a stately wood of these magnificent trees, partly shrouding the pinnacles, obelisks, and minarets which then marked the site of many noble Christian temples, but now, generally speaking, intimate the position of as many Mohammedan mosques.

These lists, for the convenience of spectators, were surrounded on all sides by long rows of seats, sloping downwards. In the middle of these seats, and exactly opposite the centre of the lists, was a high throne, erected for the Emperor himself, and which was separated from the more vulgar galleries by a circuit of wooden barricades, which an experienced eye could perceive might, in case of need, be made serviceable for purposes of defence.

The lists were sixty yards in length, by perhaps about forty in breadth, and these afforded ample space for the exercise of the combat, both on horseback and on foot. Numerous bands of the Greek citizens began, with the very break of day, to issue from the gates and posterns of the city, to examine and wonder at the construction of the lists, pass their criticisms upon the purposes of the peculiar parts of the fabric, and occupy places, to secure them for the spectacle. Shortly after arrived a large band of those soldiers who were called the Roman Immortals. These entered without ceremony, and placed themselves on either hand of the wooden barricade which fenced the Emperor's seat. Some of them took even a greater liberty; for, affecting to be pressed against the boundary, there were individuals who approached the partition itself, and seemed to meditate climbing over it, and placing themselves on the same side with the Emperor. Some old domestic slaves of the household now showed themselves, as if for the purpose of preserving this sacred circle for Alexius and his court; and, in proportion as the Immortals began to show themselves encroaching and turbulent, the strength of the defenders of the prohibited precincts seemed gradually to increase.

There was, though scarcely to be observed, besides the grand access to the imperial seat from without, another opening also from the outside, secured by a very strong door, by which different persons received admission beneath the seats destined

for the imperial party. These persons, by their length of limb, breadth of shoulders, by the fur of their cloaks, and especially by the redoubted battle-axes which all of them bore, appeared to be Varangians; but, although neither dressed in their usual habit of pomp nor in their more effectual garb of war, still, when narrowly examined, they might be seen to possess their usual offensive weapons. These men, entering in separate and straggling parties, might be observed to join the slaves of the interior of the palace in opposing the intrusion of the Immortals upon the seat of the Emperor and the benches around. Two or three Immortals, who had actually made good their frolic and climbed over the division, were flung back again, very unceremoniously, by the barbaric strength and sinewy arms of the Varangians.

The people around and in the adjacent galleries, most of whom had the air of citizens in their holyday dresses, commented a good deal on these proceedings, and were inclined strongly to make part with the Immortals. 'It was a shame to the Emperor,' they said, 'to encourage these British barbarians to interpose themselves by violence between his person and the Immortal cohorts of the city, who were in some sort his own children.'

Stephanos, the gymnastic, whose bulky strength and stature rendered him conspicuous amid this party, said, without hesitation, 'If there are two people here who will join in saying that the Immortals are unjustly deprived of their right of guarding the Emperor's person, here is the hand that shall place them beside the imperial chair.'

'Not so,' quoth a centurion of the Immortals, whom we have already introduced to our readers by the name of Harpax — 'not so, Stephanos. A happy time may arrive, but it is not yet come, my friend, in the circus. Thou knowest that on this occasion it is the Franks, or Western Franks, who undertakes the ; and the Varangians, who call these people their enemies, have some reason to claim a precedency in guarding the lists, which it might not at this moment be convenient to dispute with them. Why, man, if thou wert half so witty as thou art long, thou wouldst be sensible that it were bad woodmanship to raise the halloo upon the game ere it had been driven within compass of the nets.'

While the athlete rolled his huge grey eyes as if to conjure out the sense of this intimation, his little friend Lysimachus, the artist, putting himself to pain to stand upon his tiptoe

and look intelligent, said, approaching as near as he could to Harpax's ear, 'Thou mayst trust me, gallant centurion, that this man of mould and muscle shall neither start like a babbling hound on a false scent nor become mute and inert when the general signal is given. But tell me,' said he, speaking very low, and for that purpose mounting a bench, which brought him on a level with the centurion's ear, 'would it not have been better that a strong guard of the valiant Immortals had been placed in this wooden citadel, to ensure the object of the day?'

'Without question,' said the centurion, 'it was so meant; but these strolling Varangians have altered their station of their own authority.'

'Were it not well,' said Lysimachus, 'that you who are greatly more numerous than the barbarians, should begin a fray before more of these strangers arrive?'

'Content ye, friend,' said the centurion, coldly, 'we know our time. An attack commenced too early would be worse than thrown away, nor would an opportunity occur of executing our project in the fitting time, if an alarm were prematurely given at this moment.'

So saying, he shuffled off among his fellow-soldiers, so as to avoid suspicious intercourse with such persons as were only concerned with the civic portion of the conspirators.

As the morning advanced, and the sun took a higher station in the horizon, the various persons whom curiosity, or some more decided motive, brought to see the proposed combat were seen streaming from different parts of the town, and rushing to occupy such accommodation as the circuit round the lists afforded them. In their road to the place where preparation for combat was made, they had to ascend a sort of cape, which, in the form of a small hill, projected into the Hellespont, and the butt of which, connecting it with the shore, afforded a considerable ascent, and, of course, a more commanding view of the strait between Europe and Asia than either the immediate vicinity of the city or the still lower ground upon which the lists were erected. In passing this height, the earlier visitants of the lists made little or no halt; but after a time, when it became obvious that those who had hurried forward to the place of combat were lingering there without any object or occupation, they that followed them in the same route, with natural curiosity, paid a tribute to the landscape, bestowing some attention on its beauty, and paused to see what auguries

could be collected from the water which were likely to hav
any concern in indicating the fate of the events that were t
take place. Some straggling seamen were the first who re
marked that a squadron of the Greek small craft (being that
Tancred) were in the act of making their way from Asia, an
threatening a descent upon Constantinople.

'It is strange,' said a person, by rank the captain of a galley
'that these small vessels, which were ordered to return to Con
stantinople as soon as they disembarked the Latins, should
have remained so long at Scutari, and should not be rowing
back to the imperial city until this time, on the second day
after their departure from thence.'

'I pray to Heaven,' said another of the same profession
'that these seamen may come alone. It seems to me as if their
ensign-staffs, bowsprits, and topmasts were decorated with the
same ensigns, or nearly the same, with those which the Latins
displayed upon them when, by the Emperor's order, they were
transported towards Palestine; so methinks the voyage back
again resembles that of a fleet of merchant vessels who have
been prevented from discharging their cargo at the place of
their destination.'

'There is little good,' said one of the politicians whom we
formerly noticed, 'in dealing with such commodities, whether
they are imported or exported. Yon ample banner which
streams over the foremost galley intimates the presence of a
chieftain of no small rank among the counts, whether it be for
valour or for nobility.'

The seafaring leader added, with the voice of one who hints
alarming tidings, 'They seem to have got to a point in the
straits as high as will enable them to run down with the tide,
and clear the cape which we d on, although with what pur-
pose they aim to land so clo beneath the walls of the city, he
is a wiser man than I who pretends to determine.'

'Assuredly,' returned his comrade, 'the intention is not a
kind one. The wealth of the city has temptations to a poor
people, who only value the iron which they possess as affording
them the means of procuring the gold which they covet.'

'Ay, brother,' answered Demetrius the politician, 'but see
you not, lying at anchor within this bay which is formed by
the cape, and at the very point where these heretics are likely
to be carried by the tide, six strong vessels, having the power
of sending forth, not merely showers of darts and arrows, but
of Grecian fire, as it is called, from their hollow decks? If

those Frank gentry continue directing their course upon the imperial city, being, as they are,

Propago
Contemptrix Superûm sane, sævæque avidissima cædis,
Et violenta,

we shall speedily see a combat better worth witnessing than that announced by the great trumpet of the Varangians. If you love me, let us sit down here for a moment, and see how this matter is to end.'

'An excellent motion, my ingenious friend,' said Lascaris, which was the name of the other citizen; 'but, bethink you, shall we not be in danger from the missiles with which the audacious Latins will not fail to return the Greek fire, if, according to your conjecture, it shall be poured upon them by the imperial squadron?'

'That is not ill argued, my friend,' said Demetrius; 'but know that you have to do with a man who has been in such extremities before now; and if such a discharge should open from the sea, I would propose to you to step back some fifty yards inland, and thus to interpose the very crest of the cape between us and the discharge of missiles; a mere child might thus learn to face them without any alarm.'

'You are a wise man, neighbour,' said Lascaris, 'and possess such a mixture of valour and knowledge as becomes a man whom a friend might be supposed safely to risk his life with. There be those, for instance, who cannot show you the slightest glimpse of what is going on without bringing you within peril of your life; whereas you, my worthy friend Demetrius, between your accurate knowledge of military affairs and your regard for your friend, are sure to show him all that is to be seen without the least risk to a person who is naturally unwilling to think of exposing himself to injury. But, Holy Virgin! what is the meaning of that red flag which the Greek admiral has this instant hoisted?'

'Why, you see, neighbour,' answered Demetrius, 'yonder Western heretic continues to advance without minding the various signs which our admiral has made to him to desist, and now he hoists the bloody colours, as if a man should clench his fist and say, "If you persevere in your uncivil [illegible], I will do so and so."'

'By St. Sophia,' said Lascaris, 'and that is giving him fair warning. But what is it the imperial admiral is about to do?'

'Run — run, friend Lascaris,' said Demetrius, 'or you will see more of that than perchance you have any curiosity for.'

Accordingly, to add the strength of example to precept, Demetrius himself girt up his loins, and retreated with the most edifying speed to the opposite side of the ridge, accompanied by the greater part of the crowd, who had tarried there to witness the contest which the newsmonger promised, and were determined to take his word for their own safety. The sound and sight which had alarmed Demetrius was the discharge of a large portion of Greek fire, which perhaps may be best compared to one of those immense Congreve rockets of the present day, which takes on its shoulders a small grapnel or anchor, and proceeds groaning through the air, like a fiend overburdened by the mandate of some inexorable magician, and of which the operation was so terrifying, that the crews of the vessels attacked by this strange weapon frequently forsook every means of defence and run themselves ashore. One of the principal ingredients of this dreadful fire was supposed to be naphtha, or the bitumen which is collected on the banks of the Dead Sea, and which, when in a state of ignition, could only be extinguished by a very singular mixture, and which it was not likely to come in contact with. It produced a thick smoke and loud explosion, and was capable, says Gibbon, of communicating its flames with equal vehemence in descent or lateral progress.[1] In sieges, it was poured from the ramparts, or launched, like our bombs, in red-hot balls of stone or iron, or it was darted in flax twisted round arrows and in javelins. It was considered as a state secret of the greatest importance; and for wellnigh four centuries it was unknown to the Mohammedans. But at length the composition was discovered by the Saracens, and used by them for repelling the crusaders, and overpowering the Greeks, upon whose side it had at one time been the most formidable implement of defence. Some exaggeration we must allow for a barbarous period; but there seems no doubt that the general description of the crusader Joinville should be admitted as correct. 'It came flying through the air,' says that good knight, 'like a winged dragon, about the thickness of a hogshead, with the report of thunder and the speed of lightning, and the darkness of the night was dispelled by this horrible illumination.'

Not only the bold Demetrius and his pupil Lascaris, but all the crowd whom they influenced, fled manfully when the

[1] For a full account of the Greek fire, see Gibbon, chapter lii.

commodore of the Greeks fired the first discharge; and as the other vessels in the squadron followed his example, the heavens were filled with the unusual and outrageous noise, while the smoke was so thick as to darken the very air. As the fugitives passed the crest of the hill, they saw the seaman whom we formerly mentioned as a spectator snugly reclining under cover of a dry ditch, where he managed so as to secure himself as far as possible from any accident. He could not, however, omit breaking his jest on the politicians.

'What, ho!' he cried, 'my good friends,' without raising himself above the counterscarp of his ditch, 'will you not remain upon your station long enough to finish that hopeful lecture upon tactics by sea and land which you had so happy an opportunity of commencing? Believe me, the noise is more alarming than hurtful: the fire is all pointed in a direction opposite to yours, and if one of those dragons which you see does happen to fly landward instead of seaward, it is but the mistake of some cabin-boy, who has used his linstock with more willingness than ability.'

Demetrius and Lascaris just heard enough of the naval hero's harangue to acquaint them with the new danger with which they might be assailed by the possible misdirection of the weapons, and, rushing down towards the lists at the head of a crowd half desperate with fear, they hastily propagated the appalling news that the Latins were coming back from Asia with the purpose of landing in arms, pillaging, and burning the city.

The uproar, in the meantime, of this unexpected occurrence, was such as altogether to vindicate, in public opinion, the reported cause, however exaggerated. The thunder of the Greek fire came successively, one hard upon the other, and each in its turn spread a blot of black smoke upon the face of the landscape, which, thickened by so many successive clouds, seemed at last, like that raised by a sustained fire of modern artillery, to overshadow the whole horizon.

The small squadron of Tancred were completely hid from view in the surging volumes of darkness which the breath of the weapons of the enemy had spread around him; and it seemed by a red light, which began to show itself among the thickest of the veil of darkness, that one of the flotilla at least had caught fire. Yet the Latins resisted, with an obstinacy worthy of their own courage and the fame of their celebrated leader. Some advantage they had, on account of their small

size and their lowness in the water, as well as the clouded state of the atmosphere, which rendered them difficult marks for the fire of the Greeks.

To increase these advantages, Tancred, as well by boats as by the kind of rude signals made use of at the period, dispersed orders to his fleet that each bark, disregarding the fate of the others, should press forward individually, and that the men from each should be put on shore wheresoever and howsoever they could effect that manœuvre. Tancred himself set a noble example: he was on board a stout vessel, fenced in some degree against the effect of the Greek fire by being in a great measure covered with raw hides, which hides had also been recently steeped in water. This vessel contained upwards of a hundred valiant warriors, several of them of knightly order, who had all night toiled at the humble labours of the oar, and now in the morning applied their chivalrous hands to the arblast and to the bow, which were in general accounted the weapons of persons of a lower rank. Thus armed and thus manned, Prince Tancred bestowed upon his bark the full velocity which wind, and tide, and oar could enable her to obtain, and placing her in the situation to profit by them as much as his maritime skill could direct, he drove with the speed of lightning among the vessels of Lemnos, plying on either side bows, cross-bows, javelins, and military missiles of every kind, with the greater advantage that the Greeks, trusting to their artificial fire, had omitted arming themselves with other weapons; so that when the valiant crusader bore down on them with so much fury, repaying the terrors of their fire with a storm of bolts and arrows no less formidable, they began to feel that their own advantage was much less than they had supposed, and that, like most other dangers, the maritime fire of the Greeks, when undauntedly confronted, lost at least one-half of its terrors. The Grecian sailors, too, when they observed the vessels approach so near, filled with the steel-clad Latins, began to shrink from a contest to be maintained hand-to-hand with so terrible an enemy.

By degrees, smoke began to issue from the sides of the great Grecian argosy, and the voice of Tancred announced to his soldiers that the Grecian admiral's vessel had taken fire, owing to negligence in the management of the means of destruction she possessed, and that all they had now to do was to maintain such a distance as to avoid sharing her fate. Sparkles and flashes of flame were next seen leaping from place

to place on board of the great hulk, as if the element had had the sense and purpose of spreading wider the consternation, and disabling the few who still paid attention to the commands of their admiral and endeavoured to extinguish the fire. The consciousness of the combustible nature of the freight began to add despair to terror; from the boltsprit, the rigging, the yards, the sides, and every part of the vessel, the unfortunate crew were seen dropping themselves, to exchange for the most part a watery death for one by the more dreadful agency of fire. The crew of Tancred's bark, ceasing, by that generous prince's commands, to offer any additional annoyance to an enemy who was at once threatened by the perils of the ocean and of conflagration, ran their vessel ashore in a smooth part of the bay, and, jumping into the shallow sea, made the land without difficulty, many of their steeds being, by the exertions of the owners and the docility of the animals, brought ashore at the same time with their masters. Their commander lost no time in forming their serried ranks into a phalanx of lancers, few indeed at first, but perpetually increasing as ship after ship of the little flotilla ran ashore, or, having more deliberately moored their barks, landed their men and joined their companions.

The cloud which had been raised by the conflict was now driven to leeward before the wind, and the strait exhibited only the relics of the combat. Here tossed upon the billows the scattered and broken remains of one or two of the Latin vessels which had been burnt at the commencement of the combat, though their crews, by the exertions of their comrades, had in general been saved. Lower down were seen the remaining five vessels of the Lemnos squadron, holding a disorderly and difficult retreat, with the purpose of gaining the harbour of Constantinople. In the place so late the scene of combat lay moored the hulk of the Grecian admiral, burnt to the water's edge, and still sending forth a black smoke from its scathed beams and planks. The flotilla of Tancred, busied in discharging its troops, lay irregularly scattered along the bay, the men making ashore as they could, and taking their course to join the standard of their leader. Various black substances floated on the surface of the water, nearer or more distant to the shore; some proved to be the wreck of the vessels which had been destroyed, and others, more ominous still, the lifeless bodies of mariners who had fallen in the conflict.

The standard had been borne ashore by the Prince's favourite

page, Ernest of Apulia, so soon as the keel of Tancred's galley had grazed upon the sand. It was then pitched on the top of that elevated cape between Constantinople and the lists where Lascaris, Demetrius, and other gossips had held their station at the commencement of the engagement, but from which all had fled, between the mingled dread of the Greek fire and the missiles of the Latin crusaders.

CHAPTER XXX

SHEATHED in complete armour, and supporting with his right hand the standard of his fathers, Tancred remained with his handful of warriors like so many statues of steel, expecting some sort of attack from the Grecian party which had occupied the lists, or from the numbers whom the city gates began now to pour forth — soldiers some of them, and others citizens, many of whom were arrayed as if for conflict. These persons, alarmed by the various accounts which were given of the combatants and the progress of the fight, rushed towards the standard of Prince Tancred, with the intention of beating it to the earth, and dispersing the guards who owed it homage and defence. But if the reader shall have happened to have ridden at any time through a pastoral country, with a dog of a noble race following him, he must have remarked, in the deference ultimately paid to the high-bred animal by the shepherd's cur as he crosses the lonely glen, of which the latter conceives himself the lord and guardian, something very similar to the demeanour of the incensed Greeks when they approached near to the little band of Franks. At the first symptom of the intrusion of a stranger, the dog of the shepherd starts from his slumbers, and rushes towards the noble intruder with a clamorous declaration of war; but when the diminution of distance between them shows to the aggressor the size and strength of his opponent, he becomes like a cruiser who, in a chase, has, to his surprise and alarm, found two tier of guns opposed to him instead of one. He halts, suspends his clamorous yelping, and, in fine, ingloriously retreats to his master, with all the dishonourable marks of positively declining the combat. It was in this manner that the troops of the noisy Greeks, with much hallooing and many a boastful shout, hastened both from the town and from the lists, with the apparent intention of sweeping from the field the few companions of Tancred. As they ad-

vanced, however, within the power of remarking the calm and regular order of those men who had landed and arranged themselves under this noble chieftain's banner, their minds were altogether changed as to the resolution of instant combat; their advance became an uncertain and staggering gait; their heads were more frequently turned back to the point from which they came than towards the enemy; and their desire to provoke an instant scuffle vanished totally when there did not appear the least symptom that their opponents cared about the matter.

It added to the extreme confidence with which the Latins kept their ground, that they were receiving frequent, though small, reinforcements from their comrades, who were landing by detachments all along the beach; and that, in the course of a short hour, their amount had been raised, on horseback and foot, to a number, allowing for a few casualties, not much less than that which set sail from Scutari.

Another reason why the Latins remained unassailed was certainly the indisposition of the two principal armed parties on shore to enter into a quarrel with them. The guards of every kind who were faithful to the Emperor, and more especially the Varangians, had their orders to remain firm at their posts, some in the lists and others at various places of rendezvous in Constantinople, where their presence was necessary to prevent the effects of the sudden insurrection which Alexius knew to be meditated against him. These, therefore, made no hostile demonstration towards the band of Latins, nor was it the purpose of the Emperor they should do so.

On the other hand, the greater part of the Immortal Guards, and those citizens who were prepared to play a part in the conspiracy, had been impressed by the agents of the deceased Agelastes with the opinion that this band of Latins, commanded by Tancred, the relative of Bohemond, had been despatched by the latter to their assistance. These men, therefore, stood still, and made no attempt to guide or direct the popular efforts of such as inclined to attack these unexpected visitors; in which purpose, therefore, no very great party were united, while the majority were willing enough to find an apology for remaining quiet.

In the meantime, the Emperor, from his Palace of Blachernal, observed what passed upon the straits, and beheld his navy from Lemnos totally foiled in their attempt, by means of the Greek fire, to check the intended passage of Tancred and

his men. He had no sooner seen the leading ship of this squadron begin to beacon the darkness with its own fire than the Emperor formed a secret resolution to disown the unfortunate admiral, and make peace with the Latins, if that should be absolutely necessary, by sending them his head. He had hardly, therefore, seen the flames burst forth, and the rest of the vessels retreat from their moorings, than in his own mind the doom of the unfortunate Phraortes, for such was the name of the admiral, was signed and sealed.

Achilles Tatius, at the same instant, determining to keep a close eye upon the Emperor at this important crisis, came precipitately into the palace with an appearance of great alarm.

'My lord — my imperial lord, I am unhappy to be the messenger of such unlucky news; but the Latins have in great numbers succeeded in crossing the strait from Scutari. The Lemnos squadron endeavoured to stop them, as was last night determined upon in the imperial council of war. By a heavy discharge of the Greek fire, one or two of the crusaders' vessels were consumed, but by far the greater number of them pushed on their course, burnt the leading ship of the unfortunate Phraortes, and it is strongly reported he has himself perished, with almost all his men. The rest have cut their cables and abandoned the defence of the passage of the Hellespont.'

'And you, Achilles Tatius,' said the Emperor, 'with what purpose is it that you now bring me this melancholy news, at a period so late when I cannot amend the consequences?'

'Under favour, most gracious Emperor,' replied the conspirator, not without colouring and stammering, 'such was not my intention: I had hoped to submit a plan by which I might easily have prepared the way for correcting this little error.'

'Well, your plan, sir?' said the Emperor, drily.

'With your Sacred Majesty's leave,' said the Acolyte, 'I would myself have undertaken instantly to lead against this Tancred and his Italians the battle-axes of the faithful Varangian Guard, who will make no more account of the small number of Franks who have come ashore than the farmer holds of the hordes of rats and mice, and such-like mischievous vermin, who have harboured in his granaries.'

'And what must you,' said the Emperor, 'that I am to do, while my Anglo-Saxons fight for my sake?'

'Your Majesty,' replied Achilles, not exactly satisfied with the dry and caustic manner in which the Emperor addressed

him, 'may put yourself at the head of the Immortal cohorts of Constantinople; and I am your security, that you may either perfect the victory over the Latins, or at least redeem the most distant chance of a defeat, by advancing at the head of this choice body of domestic troops, should the day appear doubtful.'

'You yourself, Achilles Tatius,' returned the Emperor, 'have repeatedly assured us that these Immortals retain a perverse attachment to our rebel Ursel. How is it, then, you would have us entrust our defence to these bands, when we have engaged our valiant Varangians in the proposed conflict with the flower of the Western army? Did you think of this risk, sir Follower?'

Achilles Tatius, much alarmed at an intimation indicative of his purpose being known, answered, 'that in his haste he had been more anxious to recommend the plan which should expose his own person to the greater danger than that perhaps which was most attended with personal safety to his imperial master.'

'I thank you for so doing,' said the Emperor; 'you have anticipated my wishes, though it is not in my power at present to follow the advice you have given me. I would have been well contented, undoubtedly, had these Latins measured their way over the strait again, as suggested by last night's council; but since they have arrived, and stand embattled on our shores, it is better that we pay them with money and with spoil than with the lives of our gallant subjects. We cannot, after all, believe that they come with any serious intention of doing us injury: it is but the insane desire of witnessing feats of battle and single combat, which is to them the breath of their nostrils, that can have impelled them to this partial counter-march. I impose upon you, Achilles Tatius, combining the Protospathaire in the same commission with you, the duty of riding up to yonder standard, and learning of their chief, called the Prince Tancred, if he is there in person, the purpose of his return, and the cause of his entering into debate with Phraortes and the Lemnos squadron. If they send us any reasonable excuse, we shall not be averse to receive it at their hands; for we have not made so many sacrifices for the preservation of peace, to break forth into war, if, after all, so great an evil can be avoided. Thou wilt receive, therefore with a candid and complacent mind, such apologies as they may incline to bring forward; and be assured that the sight

of this puppet-show of a single combat will be enough of itself to banish every other consideration from the reflection of these giddy crusaders.'

A knock was at this moment heard at the door of the Emperor's apartment; and upon the word being given to enter, the Protospathaire made his appearance. He was arrayed in a splendid suit of ancient Roman-fashioned armour. The want of a visor left his countenance entirely visible, which, pale and anxious as it was, did not well become the martial crest and dancing plume with which it was decorated. He received the commission already mentioned with the less alacrity because the Acolyte was added to him as his colleague; for, as the reader may have observed, these two officers were of separate factions in the army, and on indifferent terms with each other. Neither did the Acolyte consider his being united in commission with the Protospathaire as a mark either of the Emperor's confidence or of his own safety. He was, however, in the meantime in the Blacquernal, where the slaves of the interior made not the least hesitation, when ordered, to execute any officer of the court. The [illegible] generals had, therefore, no other alternative than that which is allowed to two greyhounds who are reluctantly coupled together. The [illegible] of Achilles Tatius was, that he might get safely beyond [illegible] his mission to Tancred, after which he thought [illegible] explosion of the conspiracy might take place and [illegible] course, either as a matter desired and countenanced by those Latins, or passed over as a thing in which they took no interest on either side.

By the parting order of the Emperor, they were to mount on horseback at the sounding of the great Varangian trumpet, put themselves at the head of those Anglo-Saxon guards in the courtyard of their barrack, and await the Emperor's further orders.

There was something in this arrangement which pressed hard on the conscience of Achilles Tatius, yet he was at a loss to justify his apprehensions to himself, unless from a conscious feeling of his own guilt. He felt, however, that in being detained, under pretence of an honourable mission, at the head of the Varangians, he was deprived of the liberty of disposing of himself, by which he had hoped to communicate with the Cæsar and Hereward, whom he reckoned upon as his active accomplices, not knowing that the first was at this moment a prisoner in the Blacquernal, where Alexius had arrested him in the apartments of the Empress, and that the second was the

most important support of Comnenus during the whole of that eventful day.

When the gigantic trumpet of the Varangian Guards sent forth its deep signal through the city, the Protospathaire hurried Achilles along with him to the rendezvous of the Varangians, and on the way said to him, in an easy and indifferent tone, 'As the Emperor is in the field in person, you, his representative, or Follower, will, of course, transmit no orders to the body-guard, except such as shall receive their origin fi himself, so that you will consider your authority as this day suspended.'

'I regret,' said Achilles, 'that there should have seemed any cause for such precautions; I had hoped my own truth and fidelity — but I am obsequious to his imperial pleasure in all things.'

'Such are his orders,' said the other officer, 'and you know under what penalty obedience is enforced.'

'If I did not,' said Achilles, 'the composition of this body of guards would remind me, since it comprehends not only great part of those Varangians who are the immediate defenders of the Emperor's throne, but those slaves of the interior who are the executioners of his pleasure.'

To this the Protospathaire returned no answer, while the more closely the Acolyte looked upon the guard which attended, to the unusual number of nearly three thousand men, the more had he reason to believe that he might esteem himself fortunate if, by the intervention of either the Cæsar, Agelastes, or Hereward, he could pass to the conspirators a signal to suspend the intended explosion, which seemed to be provided against by the Emperor with unusual caution. He would have given the full dream of empire, with which he had been for a short time lulled asleep, to have seen but a glimpse of the azure plume of Nicephorus, the white mantle of the philosopher, or even a glimmer of Hereward's battle-axe. No such objects could be seen anywhere, and not a little was the faithless Follower displeased to see that, whichever way he turned his eyes, those of the Protospathaire, but especially of the trusty domestic officers of the empire, seemed to follow and watch their occupation.

Amidst the numerous soldiers whom he saw on all sides, his eye did not recognise a single man with whom he could exchange a friendly or confidential glance, and he stood in all that agony of terror which is rendered the more discomfiting be-

cause the traitor is conscious that, beset by various foes, his own fears are the most likely of all to betray him. Internally, as the danger seemed to increase, and as his alarmed imagination attempted to discern new reasons for it, he could only conclude that either one of the three principal conspirators, or at least some of the inferiors, had turned informers; and his doubt was, whether he should not screen his own share of what had been premeditated by flinging himself at the feet of the Emperor, and making a full confession. But still the fear of being premature in having recourse to such a base means of saving himself, joined to the absence of the Emperor, united to keep within his lips a secret which concerned not only all his future fortunes, but life itself. He was in the meantime, therefore, plunged as it were in a sea of trouble and uncertainty, while the specks of land, which seemed to promise him refuge, were distant, dimly seen, and extremely difficult of attainment.

CHAPTER XXXI

To-morrow — oh, that 's sudden. Spare him — spare him;
He 's not prepared to die.

SHAKSPEARE.

AT the moment when Achilles Tatius, with a feeling of much insecurity, awaited the unwinding of the perilous skein of state politics, a private council of the imperial family was held in the hall termed the temple of the Muses, repeatedly distinguished as the apartment in which the Princess Anna Comnena was wont to make her evening recitations to those who were permitted the honour of hearing prelections of her history. The council consisted of the Empress Irene, the Princess herself, and the Emperor, with the Patriarch of the Greek Church, as a sort of mediator between a course of severity and a dangerous degree of lenity.

'Tell not me, Irene,' said the Emperor, 'of the fine things attached to the praise of mercy. Here have I sacrificed my just revenge over my rival Ursel, and what good do I obtain by it? Why, the old obstinate man, instead of being tractable, and sensible of the generosity which has spared his life and eyes, can be with difficulty brought to exert himself in favour of the prince to whom he owes them. I used to think that eyesight and the breath of life were things which one would preserve at any sacrifice; but, on the contrary, I now believe men value them like mere toys. Talk not to me, therefore, of the gratitude to be excited by saving this ungrateful cub: and believe me, girl,' turning to Anna, 'that not only will all my subjects, should I follow your advice, laugh at me for sparing a man so predetermined to work my ruin, but even thou thyself wilt be the first to upbraid me with the foolish kindness thou art now so anxious to extort from me.'

'Your imperial pleasure, then,' said the Patriarch, 'is fixed that your unfortunate son-in-law shall suffer death for his

accession to this conspiracy, deluded by that heathen villain Agelastes and the traitorous Achilles Tatius?'

'Such is my purpose,' said the Emperor; 'and in evidence that I mean not again to pass over a sentence of this kind with a seeming execution only, as in the case of Ursel, this ungrateful traitor of ours shall be led from the top of the staircase, or Ladder of Acheron, as it is called, through the large chamber named the Hall of Judgment, at the upper end of which are arranged the apparatus for execution, by which I swear ——'

'Swear not at all!' said the Patriarch. 'I forbid thee, in the name of that Heaven whose voice speaks in my person — though unworthy — to quench the smoking flax, or destroy the slight hope which there may remain that you may finally be persuaded to alter your purpose respecting your misguided son-in-law, within the space allotted to him to sue for your mercy. Remember, I pray you, the remorse of Constantine.'

'What means your reverence?' said Irene.

'A trifle,' replied the Emperor, 'not worthy being quoted from such a mouth as the Patriarch's, being, as it probably is, a relic of paganism.'

'What is it?' exclaimed the females anxiously, in the hope of hearing something which might strengthen their side of the argument, and something moved, perhaps, by curiosity, a motive which seldom slumbers in a female bosom, even when the stronger passions are in arms.

'The Patriarch will tell you,' answered Alexius, 'since you must needs know; though, I promise you, you will not receive any assistance in your argument from a silly legendary tale.'

'Hear it, however,' said the Patriarch; 'for, though it is a tale of the olden time, and sometimes supposed to refer to the period when heathenism predominated, it is no less true that it was a vow made and registered in the chancery of the rightful Deity by an emperor of Greece.

'What I am now to relate to you,' continued he, 'is, in truth, a tale not only of a Christian emperor, but of him who made the whole empire Christian; and of that very Constantine who was also the first who declared Constantinople to be the metropolis of the empire. This hero, remarkable alike for his zeal for religion and for his warlike achievements, was crowned by Heaven with repeated victory, and with all manner of blessings, save that unity in his family which wise men are most ambitious to possess. Not only was the blessing of

concord among brethren denied to the family of this triumphal emperor, but a deserving son of mature age, who had been supposed to aspire to share the throne with his father, was suddenly, and at midnight, called upon to enter his defence against a capital charge of treason. You will readily excuse my referring to the arts by which the son was rendered guilty in the eyes of the father. Be it enough to say, that the unfortunate young man fell a victim to the guilt of his step-mother, Fausta, and that he disdained to exculpate himself from a charge so gross and so erroneous. It is said that the anger of the Emperor was kept up against his son by the sycophants who called upon Constantine to observe that the culprit disdained even to supplicate for mercy or vindicate his innocence from so foul a charge.

'But the death-blow had no sooner struck the innocent youth than his father obtained proof of the rashness with which he had acted. He had at this period been engaged in constructing the subterranean parts of the Blacquernal Palace which his remorse appointed to contain a record of his paternal grief and contrition. At the upper part of the staircase, called the Pit of Acheron, he caused to be constructed a large chamber, still called the Hall of Judgment, for the purpose of execution. A passage through an archway in the upper wall leads from the hall to the place of misery, where the axe or other engine, is disposed for the execution of state prisoners of consequence. Over this archway was placed a species of marble altar, surmounted by an image of the unfortunate Crispus; the materials were gold, and it bore the memorable inscription, TO MY SON, WHOM I RASHLY CONDEMNED, AND TOO HASTILY EXECUTED. When constructing this passage, Constantine made a vow that he himself and his posterity, being reigning emperors, would stand beside the statue of Crispus at the time when any individual of their family should be led to execution, and, before they suffered him to pass from the Hall of Judgment to the chamber of death, that they should themselves be personally convinced of the truth of the charge under which he suffered.

'Time rolled on; the memory of Constantine was remembered almost like that of a saint, and the respect paid to it threw into shadow the anecdote of his son's death. The exigencies of the state rendered it difficult to keep so large a sum in specie invested in a statue, which called to mind the unpleasant failings of so great a man. Your Imperial High-

ness's predecessors applied the metal which formed the statue to support the Turkish wars; and the remorse and penance of Constantine died away in an obscure tradition of the church or of the palace. Still, however, unless your Imperial Majesty has strong reasons to the contrary, I should give it as my opinion that you will hardly achieve what is due to the memory of the greatest of your predecessors unless you give this unfortunate criminal, being so near a relation of your own, an opportunity of pleading his cause before passing by the altar of refuge, being the name which is commonly given to the monument of the unfortunate Crispus, son of Constantine, although now deprived both of the golden letters which composed the inscription and the golden image which represented the royal sufferer.'

A mournful strain of music was now heard to ascend the stair so often mentioned.

'If I must hear the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius ere he pass the altar of refuge, there must be no loss of time,' said the Emperor; 'for these melancholy sounds announce that he has already approached the Hall of Judgment.'

Both the imperial ladies began instantly, with the utmost earnestness, to deprecate the execution of the Cæsar's doom, and to conjure Alexius, as he hoped for quiet in his household, and the everlasting gratitude of his wife and daughter, that he would listen to their entreaties in behalf of an unfortunate man, who had been seduced into guilt, but not from his heart.

'I will at least see him,' said the Emperor, 'and the holy vow of Constantine shall be in the present instance strictly observed. But remember, you foolish women, that the state of Crispus and the present Cæsar is as different as guilt from innocence, and that their fates, therefore, may be justly decided upon opposite principles and with opposite results. But I will confront this criminal; and you, Patriarch, may be present to render what help is in your power to a dying man; for you, the wife and mother of the traitor, you will, methinks, do well to retire to the church, and pray God for the soul of the deceased, rather than disturb his last moments with unavailing lamentations.'

'Alexius,' said the Empress Irene, 'I beseech you to be contented; be assured that we will not leave you in this dogged humour of blood-shedding, lest you make such materials for history as are fitter for the time of Nero than of Constantine.'

The Emperor, without reply, led the way into the Hall of

Judgment, where a much stronger light than usual was already shining up the stair of Acheron, from which were heard to sound, by sullen and intermitted fits, the penitential psalm which the Greek Church has appointed to be sung at executions. Twenty mute slaves, the pale colour of whose turbans gave a ghastly look to the withered cast of their features and the glaring whiteness of their eyeballs, ascended two by two, as it were from the bowels of the earth, each of them bearing in one hand a naked sabre and in the other a lighted torch. After these came the unfortunate Nicephorus; his looks were those of a man half-dead from the terror of immediate dissolution, and what he possessed of remaining attention was turned successively to two black-stoled monks, who were anxiously repeating religious passages to him alternately from the Greek Scripture and the form of devotion adopted by the court of Constantinople. The Cæsar's dress also corresponded to his mournful fortunes: his legs and arms were bare, and a simple white tunic, the neck of which was already open, showed that he had assumed the garments which were to serve his last turn. A tall muscular Nubian slave, who considered himself obviously as the principal person in the procession, bore on his shoulder a large heavy headsman's axe, and, like a demon waiting on a sorcerer, stalked step for step after his victim. The rear of the procession was closed by a band of four priests, each of whom chanted from time to time the devotional psalm which was thundered forth on the occasion; and another of slaves, armed with bows and quivers, and with lances, to resist any attempt at rescue, if such should be offered.

It would have required a harder heart than that of the unlucky princess to have resisted this gloomy apparatus of fear and sorrow, surrounding, at the same time directed against, a beloved object, the lover of her youth, and the husband of her bosom, within a few minutes of the termination of his mortal career.

As the mournful train approached towards the altar of refuge, half-encircled as it now was by the two great and expanded arms which projected from the wall, the Emperor, who stood directly in the passage, threw upon the flame of the altar some chips of aromatic wood, steeped in spirit of wine, which, leaping at once into a blaze, illuminated the doleful procession, the figure of the principal culprit, and the slaves, who had most of them extinguished their flambeaux so soon as they had served the purpose of lighting them up the staircase.

The sudden light spread from the altar failed not to make the Emperor and the Princesses visible to the mournful group which approached through the hall. All halted — all were silent. It was a meeting, as the Princess has expressed herself in her historical work, such as took place betwixt Ulysses and the inhabitants of the other world, who, when they tasted of the blood of his sacrifices, recognised him indeed, but with empty lamentations, and gestures feeble and shadowy. The hymn of contrition sunk also into silence; and, of the whole group, the only figure rendered more distinct was the gigantic executioner, whose high and furrowed forehead, as well as the broad steel of his axe, caught and reflected back the bright gleam from the altar. Alexius saw the necessity of breaking the silence which ensued, lest it should give the intercessors for the prisoner an opportunity of renewing their entreaties.

'Nicephorus Briennius,' he said, with a voice which, although generally interrupted by a slight hesitation, which procured him, among his enemies, the nickname of the Stutterer, yet, upon important occasions like the present, was so judiciously tuned and balanced in its sentences that no such defect was at all visible — 'Nicephorus Briennius,' he said, 'late Cæsar, the lawful doom hath been spoken, that, having conspired against the life of thy rightful sovereign and affectionate father, Alexius Comnenus, thou shalt suffer the appropriate sentence, by having thy head struck from thy body. Here, therefore, at the last altar of refuge, I meet thee, according to the vow of the immortal Constantine, for the purpose of demanding whether thou hast anything to allege why this doom should not be executed? Even at this eleventh hour thy tongue is unloosed to speak with freedom what may concern thy life. All is prepared in this world and in the next. Look forward beyond yon archway — the block is fixed. Look behind thee, thou see'st the axe already sharpened. Thy place for good or evil in the next world is already determined; time flies — eternity approaches. If thou hast aught to say, speak it freely; if nought, confess the justice of thy sentence, and pass on to death.'

The Emperor commenced this oration with those looks described by his daughter as so piercing that they dazzled like lightning, and his periods, if not precisely flowing like burning lava, were yet the accents of a man having the power of absolute command, and as such produced an effect not only on the criminal, but also upon the Prince himself, whose

watery eyes and faltering voice acknowledged his sense ar feeling of the fatal import of the present moment.

Rousing himself to the conclusion of what he had co menced, the Emperor again demanded whether the prison had anything to say in his own defence.

Nicephorus was not one of those hardened criminals wh may be termed the very prodigies of history, from the coolnes with which they contemplated the consummation of the crimes, whether in their own punishment or the misfortunes others. 'I have been tempted,' he said, dropping on his knee 'and I have fallen. I have nothing to allege in excuse of m folly and ingratitude; but I stand prepared to die to expiat my guilt.' A deep sigh, almost amounting to a scream, wa here heard, close behind the Emperor, and its cause assigne by the sudden exclamation of Irene — 'My lord — my lord your daughter is gone!' And in fact Anna Comnena ha sunk into her mother's arms without either sense or motion The father's attention was instantly called to support hi swooning child, while the unhappy husband strove with the guards to be permitted to go to the assistance of his wife 'Give me but five minutes of that time which the law has abridged; let my efforts but assist in recalling her to a life which should be as long as her virtues and her talents deserve and then let me die at her feet, for I care not to go an inch beyond.'

The Emperor, who in fact had been more astonished at the boldness and rashness of Nicephorus than alarmed by his power, considered him as a man rather misled than misleading others, and felt, therefore, the full effect of this last interview. He was, besides, not naturally cruel, where severities were to be enforced under his own eye.

'The divine and immortal Constantine,' he said, 'did not, I am persuaded, subject his descendants to this severe trial in order further to search out the innocence of the criminals, but rather to give to those who came after him an opportunity of generously forgiving a crime which could not without pardon — the express pardon of the prince — escape without punishment. I rejoice that I am born of the willow rather than of the oak, and I acknowledge my weakness, that not even the safety of my own life, or resentment of this unhappy man's treasonable machinations, have the same effect with me as the tears of my wife and the swooning of my daughter. Rise up, Nicephorus Briennius, freely pardoned. and restored even to the rank of

Cæsar. We will direct thy pardon to be made out by the great Logothete, and sealed with the golden bull. For four-and-twenty hours thou art a prisoner, until an arrangement is made for preserving the public peace. Meanwhile, thou wilt remain under the charge of the Patriarch, who will be answerable for thy forthcoming. Daughter and wife, you must now go hence to your own apartment; a future time will come, during which you may have enough of weeping and embracing, mourning and rejoicing. Pray Heaven that I, who, having been trained on till I have sacrificed justice and true policy to uxorious compassion and paternal tenderness of heart, may not have cause at last for grieving in good earnest for all the events of this miscellaneous drama.'

The pardoned Cæsar, who endeavoured to regulate his ideas according to this unexpected change, found it as difficult to reconcile himself to the reality of his situation as Ursel to the face of nature, after having been long deprived of enjoying it; so much do the dizziness and confusion of ideas occasioned by moral and physical causes of surprise and terror resemble each other in their effects on the understanding.

At length he stammered forth a request that he might be permitted to go to the field with the Emperor, and divert, by the interposition of his own body, the traitorous blows which some desperate man might aim against that of his prince, in a day which was too likely to be one of danger and bloodshed.

'Hold there!' said Alexius Comnenus. 'We will not begin thy newly-redeemed life by renewed doubts of thine allegiance; yet it is but fitting to remind thee that thou art still the nominal and ostensible head of those who expect to take a part in this day's insurrection, and it will be the safest course to trust its pacification to others than to thee. Go, sir, compare notes with the Patriarch, and merit your pardon by confessing to him any traitorous intentions concerning this foul conspiracy with which we may be as yet unacquainted. Daughter and wife, farewell! I must now depart for the lists, where I have to speak with the traitor Achilles Tatius and the heathenish infidel Agelastes, if he still lives, but of whose providential death I hear a confirmed rumour.'

'Yet do not go, my dearest father,' said the Princess; 'but let me rather go to encourage the loyal subjects in your behalf. The extreme kindness which you have extended towards my guilty husband convinces me of the extent of your affection towards your unworthy daughter, and the greatness of the

sacrifice which you have made to her almost childish affection for an ungrateful man who put your life in danger.'

'That is to say, daughter,' said the Emperor, smiling, 'that the pardon of your husband is a boon which has lost its merit when it is granted? Take my advice, Anna, and think otherwise: wives and their husbands ought in prudence to forget their offences towards each other as soon as human nature will permit them. Life is too short, and conjugal tranquillity too uncertain, to admit of dwelling long upon such irritating subjects. To your apartments, Princesses, and prepare the scarlet buskins and the embroidery which is displayed on the cuffs and collars of the Cæsar's robe, indicative of his high rank. He must not be seen without them on the morrow. Reverend father, I remind you once more that the Cæsar is in your personal custody from this moment until to-morrow at the same hour.'

They parted; the Emperor repairing to put himself at the head of his Varangian Guards; the Cæsar, under the superintendence of the Patriarch, withdrawing into the interior of the Blacquernal Palace, where Nicephorus Briennius was under the necessity of 'unthreading the rude eye of rebellion,' and throwing such lights as were in his power upon the progress of the conspiracy.

'Agelastes,' he said, 'Achilles Tatius, and Hereward the Varangian were the persons principally entrusted in its progress. But whether they had been all true to their engagements he did not pretend to be assured.'

In the female apartments there was a violent discussion betwixt Anna Comnena and her mother. The Princess had undergone during the day many changes of sentiment and feeling; and though they had finally united themselves into one strong interest in her husband's favour, yet no sooner was the fear of his punishment removed than the sense of his ungrateful behaviour began to revive. She became sensible also that a woman of her extraordinary attainments, who had been by a universal course of flattery disposed to entertain a very high opinion of her own consequence, made rather a poor figure when she had been the passive subject of a long series of intrigues, by which she was destined to be disposed of in one way or the other, according to the humour of a set of subordinate conspirators, who never so much as dreamed of regarding her as a being capable of forming a wish in her own behalf or even yielding or refusing a consent. Her father's authority

over her, and right to dispose of her, was less questionable; but even then it was something derogatory to the dignity of a princess born in the purple — an authoress besides, and giver of immortality — to be, without her own consent, thrown, as it were, at the head now of one suitor, now of another, however mean or disgusting, whose alliance could for the time benefit the Emperor. The consequence of these moody reflections was, that Anna Comnena deeply toiled in spirit for the discovery of some means by which she might assert her sullied dignity, and various were the expedients which she revolved.

CHAPTER XXXII

But now the ' d of fate is on the curtain,
And brings the scene to light.

Don Sebastian.

THE gigantic trumpet of the Varangians sounded its loudest note of march, and the squadrons of the faithful guards, sheathed in complete mail, and inclosing in their centre the person of their imperial master, set forth upon their procession through the streets of Constantinople. The form of Alexius, glittering in his splendid armour, seemed no unmeet central point for the force of an empire; and while the citizens crowded in the train of him and his escort, there might be seen a visible difference between those who came with the premeditated intention of tumult and the greater part, who, like the multitude of every great city, thrust each other and shout for rapture on account of any cause for which a crowd may be collected together. The hope of the conspirators was lodged chiefly in the Immortal Guards, who were levied principally for the defence of Constantinople, partook of the general prejudices of the citizens, and had been particularly influenced by those in favour of Ursel, by whom, previous to his imprisonment, they had themselves been commanded. The conspirators had determined that those of this body who were considered as most discontented should early in the morning take possession of the posts in the lists most favourable for their purpose of assaulting the Emperor's person. But, in spite of all efforts short of actual violence, for which the time did not seem to be come, they found themselves disappointed in this purpose by parties of the Varangian Guards, planted with apparent carelessness, but, in fact, with perfect skill, for the prevention of their enterprise. Somewhat confounded at perceiving that a design which they could not suppose to be suspected was, nevertheless, on every part controlled and counter checked, the conspirators began to look for the principal persons of their own

party, on whom they depended for orders in this emergency; but neither the Cæsar nor Agelastes was to be seen, whether in the lists or on the military march from Constantinople; and though Achilles Tatius rode in the latter assembly, yet it might be clearly observed that he was rather attending upon the Protospathaire than assuming that independence as an officer which he loved to affect.

In this manner, as the Emperor with his glittering bands approached the phalanx of Tancred and his followers, who were drawn up, it will be remembered, upon a rising cape between the city and the lists, the main body of the imperial procession deflected in some degree from the straight road in order to march past them without interruption; while the Protospathaire and the Acolyte passed, under the escort of a band of Varangians, to bear the Emperor's inquiries to Prince Tancred concerning the purpose of his being there with his band. The short march was soon performed; the large trumpet which attended the two officers sounded a parley, and Tancred himself, remarkable for that personal beauty which Tasso has preferred to any of the crusaders, except Rinaldo d'Este, the creature of his own poetical imagination, advanced to parley with them.

'The Emperor of Greece,' said the Protospathaire to Tancred, 'requires the Prince of Otranto to show, by the two high officers who shall deliver him this message, with what purpose he has returned, contrary to his oath, to the right side of these straits, assuring Prince Tancred, at the same time, that nothing will so much please the Emperor as to receive an answer not at variance with his treaty with the Duke of Bouillon, and the oath which was taken by the crusading nobles and their soldiers; since that would enable the Emperor, in conformity to his own wishes, by his kind reception of Prince Tancred and his troop, to show how high is his estimation of the dignity of the one and the bravery of both. We wait an answer.'

The tone of the message had nothing in it very alarming, and its substance cost Prince Tancred very little trouble to answer. 'The cause,' he said, 'of the Prince of Otranto appearing here with fifty lances is this cartel, in which a combat is appointed betwixt Nicephorus Briennius, called the Cæsar, a high member of this empire, and a worthy knight of great fame, the partner of the pilgrims who have taken the cross, in their high vow to rescue Palestine from the infidels. The name of the said knight is the redoubted Robert of Paris. It becomes, therefore, an obligation, indispensable upon the holy

pilgrims of the crusade, to send one chief of their number, with a body of men-at-arms, sufficient to see, as is usual, fair-play between the combatants. That such is their intention may be seen from their sending no more than fifty lances, with their furniture and following; whereas it would have cost them no trouble to have detached ten times the number, had they nourished any purpose of interfering by force, or disturbing the fair combat which is about to take place. The Prince of Otranto, therefore, and his followers, will place themselves at the disposal of the imperial court, and witness the proceedings of the combat, with the most perfect confidence that the rules of fair battle will be punctually observed.'

The two Grecian officers transmitted this reply to the Emperor, who heard it with pleasure, and, immediately proceeding to act upon the principle which he had laid down, of maintaining peace, if possible, with the crusaders, named Prince Tancred with the Protospathaire as field-marshals of the lists, fully empowered, under th Emperor, to decide all the terms of the combat, and to have recourse to Alexius himself where their opinions disagreed. This was made known to the assistants, who were thus prepared for the entry into the lists of the Grecian officer and the Italian prince in full armour, while a proclamation announced to all the spectators their solemn office. The same annunciation commanded the assistants of every kind to clear a convenient part of the seats which surrounded the lists on one side, that it might serve for the accommodation of Prince Tancred's followers.

Achilles Tatius, who was a heedful observer of all these passages, saw with alarm that by the last collocation the armed Latins were interposed between the Immortal Guard and the discontented citizens, which made it most probable that the conspiracy was discovered, and that Alexius found he had a good right to reckon upon the assistance of Tancred and his forces in the task of suppressing it. This, added to the cold and caustic manner in which the Emperor communicated his commands to him, made the Acolyte of opinion that his best chance of escape from the danger in which he was now placed was, that the whole conspiracy should fall to the ground, and that the day should pass without the least attempt to shake the throne of Alexius Comnenus. Even then it continued highly doubtful whether a despot so wily and so suspicious as the Emperor would think it sufficient to rest satisfied with the private knowledge of the undertaking and its failure, with

which he appeared to be possessed, without putting into exercise the bow-strings and the blinding-irons of the mutes of the interior. There was, however, little possibility either of flight or of resistance. The least attempt to withdraw himself from the neighbourhood of those faithful followers of the Emperor's personal foes of his own, by whom he was gradually and more closely surrounded, became each moment more perilous, and more certain to provoke a rupture which it was the interest of the weaker party to delay, with whatever difficulty. And while the soldiers under Achilles's immediate authority seemed still to treat him as their superior officer, and appeal to him for the word of command, it became more and more evident that the slightest degree of suspicion which should be excited would be the instant signal for his being placed under arrest. With a trembling heart, therefore, and eyes dimmed by the powerful idea of soon parting with the light of day and all that it made visible, the Acolyte saw himself condemned to watch the turn of circumstances, over which he could have no influence, and to content himself with waiting the result of a drama, in which his own life was concerned, although the piece was played by others. Indeed, it seemed as if through the whole assembly some signal was waited for, which no one was in readiness to give.

The discontented citizens and soldiers looked in vain for Agelastes and the Cæsar; and when they observed the condition of Achilles Tatius, it seemed such as rather to express doubt and consternation than to give encouragement to the hopes they had entertained. Many of the lower classes, however, felt too secure in their own insignificance to fear the personal consequences of a tumult, and were desirous, therefore, to provoke the disturbance, which seemed hushing itself to sleep.

A hoarse murmur, which attained almost the importance of a shout, exclaimed — 'Justice — justice! Ursel — Ursel! The rights of the Immortal Guards!' etc. At this the trumpet of the Varangians awoke, and its tremendous tones were heard to peal loudly over the whole assembly, as the voice of its presiding deity. A dead silence prevailed in the multitude, and the voice of a herald announced, in the name of Alexius Comnenus, his sovereign will and pleasure.

'Citizens of the Roman empire, your complaints, stirred up by factious men, have reached the ear of your Emperor; you shall yourselves be witness to his power of gratifying

people. At your request, and before your own sight, the visual ray which hath been quenched shall be reillumined; the mind whose efforts were restricted to the imperfect supply of individual wants shall be again extended, if such is the owner's will, to the charge of an ample theme or division of the empire. Political jealousy, more hard to receive conviction than the blind to receive sight, shall yield itself conquered, by the Emperor's paternal love of his people and his desire to give them satisfaction. Ursel, the darling of your wishes, supposed to be long dead, or at least believed to exist in blinded seclusion, is restored to you well in health, clear in eyesight, and possessed of every faculty necessary to adorn the Emperor's favour or merit the affection of the people.'

As the herald thus spoke, a figure, which had hitherto stood shrouded behind some officers of the interior, now stepped forth, and flinging from him a dusky veil, in which he was wrapt, appeared in a dazzling scarlet garment, of which the sleeves and buskins displayed those ornaments which expressed a rank nearly adjacent to that of the Emperor himself. He held in his hand a silver truncheon, the badge of delegated command over the Immortal Guards, and, kneeling before the Emperor, presented it to his hands, intimating a virtual resignation of the command which it implied. The whole assembly were electrified at the appearance of a person long supposed either dead or by cruel means rendered incapable of public trust. Some recognised the man whose appearance and features were not easily forgot, and gratulated him upon his most unexpected return to the service of his country. Others stood suspended in amazement, not knowing whether to trust their eyes, while a few determined malcontents eagerly pressed upon the assembly an allegation that the person presented as Ursel was only a counterfeit, and the whole a trick of the Emperor.

'Speak to them, noble Ursel,' said the Emperor. 'Tell them that, if I have sinned against thee, it has been because I was deceived, and that my disposition to make thee amends is as ample as ever was my purpose of doing thee wrong.'

'Friends and countrymen,' said Ursel, turning himself to the assembly, 'his Imperial Majesty permits me to offer my assurance that, if in any former part of my life I have suffered at his hand, it is more than wiped out by the feelings of a moment so glorious as this; and that I am well satisfied, from the present instant, to spend what remains of my life in the

service of the most generous and beneficent of sovereigns, or, with his permission, to bestow it in preparing, by devotional exercises, for an infinite immortality to be spent in the society of saints and angels. Whichever choice I shall make, I reckon that you, my beloved countrymen, who have remembered me so kindly during years of darkness and captivity, will not fail to afford me the advantage of your prayers.'

This sudden apparition of the long-lost Ursel had too much of that which elevates and surprises not to captivate the multitude, and they sealed their reconciliation with three tremendous shouts, which are said so to have shaken the air that birds, incapable of sustaining themselves, sunk down exhausted out of their native element.

CHAPTER XXXIII

'What, leave the combat out!' exclaimed the knight.
'Yes! or we must renounce the Stagyrite.'
'So large a crowd the stage will ne'er contain.'
'Then build a new, or act it on a plain.'

POPE.

THE sounds of the gratulating shout had expanded over the distant shores of the Bosphorus by mountain and forest, and died at length in the farthest echoes, when the people, in the silence which ensued, appeared to ask each other what next scene was about to adorn a pause so solemn and a stage so august. The pause would probably have soon given place to some new clamour, for a multitude, from whatever cause assembled, seldom remains long silent, had not a new signal from the Varangian trumpet given notice of a fresh purpose to solicit their attention. The blast had something in its tone spirit-stirring and yet melancholy, partaking both of the character of a point of war and of the doleful sounds which might be chosen to announce an execution of peculiar solemnity. Its notes were high and widely extended, and prolonged and long dwelt upon, as if the brazen clamour had been waked by something more tremendous than the lungs of mere mortals.

The multitude appeared to acknowledge these awful sounds, which were indeed such as habitually solicited their attention to imperial edicts of melancholy import, by which rebellions were announced, dooms of treason discharged, and other tidings of a great and affecting import intimated to the people of Constantinople. When the trumpet had in its turn ceased, with its thrilling and doleful notes, to agitate the immense assembly, the voice of the herald again addressed them.

It announced in a grave and affecting strain, that it sometimes chanced how the people failed in their duty to a sovereign, who was unto them as a father, and how it became the painful

duty of the prince to use the rod of correction rather than the olive sceptre of mercy.

'Fortunate,' continued the herald, 'it is when the supreme Deity, having taken on Himself the preservation of a throne in beneficence and justice resembling His own, has also assumed the most painful task of His earthly delegate, by punishing those whom His unerring judgment acknowledges as most guilty, and leaving to His substitute the more agreeable task of pardoning such of those as art has misled, and treachery hath involved in its snares. Such being the case, Greece and its accompanying themes are called upon to listen and learn, that a villain, named Agelastes, who had insinuated himself into the favour of the Emperor, by affectation of deep knowledge and severe virtue, had formed a treacherous plan for the murder of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus, and a revolution in the state. This person, who, under pretended wisdom, hid the doctrines of a heretic and the vices of a sensualist, had found proselytes to his doctrines even among the Emperor's household, and those persons who were most bound to him, and down to the lower order, to excite the last of whom were dispersed a multitude of forged rumours, similar to those concerning Ursel's death and blindness, of which your own eyes have witnessed the falsehood.'

The people, who had hitherto listened in silence, upon this appeal broke forth in a clamorous assent. They had scarcely been again silent ere the iron-voiced herald continued his proclamation.

'Not Korah, Dathan, and Abiram,' he said, 'had more justly, or more directly, fallen under the doom of an offended Deity than this villain Agelastes. The steadfast earth gaped to devour the apostate sons of Israel, but the termination of this wretched man's existence has been, as far as can now be known, by the direct means of an evil spirit, whom his own arts had evoked into the upper air. By the spirit, as would appear by the testimony of a noble lady and other females, who witnessed the termination of his life, Agelastes was strangled, a fate well becoming his odious crimes. Such a death, even of a guilty man, must, indeed, be most painful to the humane feelings of the Emperor, because it involves suffering beyond this world. But the awful catastrophe carries with it this comfort, that it absolves the Emperor from the necessity of carrying any farther a vengeance which Heaven itself seems to have limited to the exemplary punishment of the principal conspirator. Some

changes of offices and situations shall be made, for the sake of safety and good order; but the secret who had or who had not been concerned in this awful crime shall sleep in the bosoms of the persons themselves implicated, since the Emperor is determined to dismiss their offence from his memory, as the effect of a transient delusion. Let all, therefore, who now hear me, whatever consciousness they may possess of a knowledge of what was this day intended, return to their houses, assured that their own thoughts will be their only punishment. Let them rejoice that Almighty goodness has saved them from the meditations of their own hearts, and, according to the affecting language of Scripture, "Let them repent and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall them."'

The voice of the herald then ceased, and was again answered by the shouts of the audience. These were unanimous: for circumstances contributed to convince the malcontent party that they stood at the sovereign's mercy, and the edict that they heard having shown his acquaintance with their guilt, it lay at his pleasure to let loose upon them the strength of the Varangians, while, from the terms on which it had pleased him to receive Tancred, it was probable that the Apulian forces were also at his disposal.

The voices, therefore, of the bulky Stephanos, of Harpax the centurion, and other rebels, both of the camp and city, were the first to thunder forth their gratitude for the clemency of the Emperor, and their thanks to Heaven for his preservation.

The audience, reconciled to the thoughts of the discovered and frustrated conspiracy, began meantime, according to their custom, to turn themselves to the consideration of the matter which had more avowedly called them together, and private whispers, swelling by degrees into murmurs, began to express the dissatisfaction of the citizens at being thus long assembled without receiving any communication respecting the announced purpose of their meeting.

Alexius was not slow to perceive the tendency of their thoughts; and, on a signal from his hand, the trumpets blew a point of war, in sounds far more lively than those which had prefaced the imperial edict. 'Robert Count of Paris,' then said a herald, 'art thou here in thy place, or by knightly proxy, to answer the challenge brought against thee by his Imperial Highness Nicephorus Briennius, Cæsar of this empire?'

The Emperor conceived himself to have equally provided against the actual appearance at this call of either of the

parties named, and had prepared an exhibition of another kind, namely, certain cages, tenanted by wild animals, which, being now loosened, should do their pleasure with each other in the eyes of the assembly. His astonishment and confusion, therefore, were great when, as the last note of the proclamation died in the echo, Count Robert of Paris stood forth, armed *cap-à-pie*, his mailed charger led behind him from within the curtained inclosure, at one end of the lists, as if ready to mount at the signal of the marshal.

The alarm and the shame that were visible in every countenance near the imperial presence, when no Cæsar came forth in like fashion to confront the formidable Frank, were not of long duration. Hardly had the style and title of the Count of Paris been duly announced by the heralds, and their second summons of his antagonist uttered in due form, when a person, dressed like one of the Varangian Guards, sprung into the lists, and announced himself as ready to do battle in the name and place of the Cæsar Nicephorus Briennius, and for the honour of the empire.

Alexius, with the utmost joy, beheld this unexpected assistance, and readily gave his consent to the bold soldier who stood thus forward in the hour of utmost need to take upon himself the dangerous office of champion. He the more readily acquiesced as, from the size and appearance of the soldier, and the gallant bearing he displayed, he had no doubt of his individual person, and fully confided in his valour.

But Prince Tancred interposed his opposition. 'The lists,' he said, 'were only open to knights and nobles; or, at any rate, men were not permitted to meet therein who were not of some equality of birth and blood; nor could he remain a silent witness where the laws of chivalry were in such respects forgotten.'

'Let Count Robert of Paris,' said the Varangian, 'look upon my countenance, and say whether he has not, by promise, removed all objection to our contest which might be founded upon an inequality of condition, and let him be judge himself whether, by meeting me in this field, he will do more than comply with a compact which he has long since become bound by.'

Count Robert, upon this appeal, advanced and acknowledged, without further debate, that, notwithstanding their difference of rank, he held himself bound by his solemn word to give this valiant soldier a meeting in the field; that he regretted, on

account of this gallant man's eminent virtues, and the hig services he had receive[illegible] at his hands, that they should no stand upon terms of such bloody arbitration; but, since nothin was more common than that the fate of war called on friend to meet each other in mortal combat, he would not shrin from the engagement he had pledged himself to; nor did h think his quality in the slightest degree infringed or diminishe by meeting in battle a warrior so well known and of such goo account as Hereward, the brave Varangian. He added, tha 'he willingly admitted that the combat should take place o foot, and with the battle-axe, which was the ordinary weapo of the Varangian guard.'

Hereward had stood still, almost like a statue, while thi discourse passed; but when the Count of Paris had made thi speech, he inclined himself towards him with a graceful obei sance, and expressed himself honoured and gratified by th manly manner in which the Count acquitted himself, accordin to his promise, with complete honour and fidelity.

'What we are to do,' said Count Robert, with a sigh o regret, which even his love of battle could not prevent, 'let u do quickly: the heart may be affected, but the hand must d its duty.'

Hereward assented, with the additional remark, 'Let us then lose no more time, which is already flying fast.' And, grasping his axe, he stood prepared for combat.

'I also am ready,' said Count Robert of Paris, taking the same weapon from a Varangia[illegible]dier, who stood by the lists. Both were immediately upo[illegible]rt, nor did further forms or circumstances put off the in[illegible]duel.

The first blows were given a[illegible] parried with great caution, and Prince Tancred and others thought that on the part of Count Robert the caution was much greater than usual: but, in combat as in food, the appetite increases with the exercise. The fiercer passions began, as usual, to awaken with the clash of arms and the sense of deadly blows, some of which were made with great fury on either side, and parried with considerable difficulty, and not so completely but what blood flowed on both their parts. The Greeks looked with astonishment on a single combat such as they h[illegible]seldom witnessed, and held their breath as they beheld the furious blows dealt by either warrior, and expected with each stroke the annihilation of one or other of the combatants. As [illegible] their strength and agility seemed somewhat equally matche[illegible], although those who judged

with more pretention to knowledge were of opinion that Count Robert spared putting forth some part of the military skill for which he was celebrated; and the remark was generally made and allowed that he had surrendered a great advantage by not insisting upon his right to fight upon horseback. On the other hand, it was the general opinion that the gallant Varangian omitted to take advantage of one or two opportunities afforded him by the heat of Count Robert's temper, who obviously was incensed at the duration of the combat.

Accident at length seemed about to decide what had been hitherto an equal contest. Count Robert, making a feint on one side of his antagonist, struck him on the other, which was uncovered, with the edge of his weapon, so that the Varangian reeled, and seemed in the act of falling to the earth. The usual sound made by spectators at the sight of any painful or unpleasant circumstance, by drawing the breath between the teeth, was suddenly heard to pass through the assembly, while a female voice loud and eagerly exclaimed — 'Count Robert of Paris, forget not this day that thou owest a life to Heaven and me.' The Count was in the act of again seconding his blow, with what effect could hardly be judged, when this cry reached his ears, and apparently took away his disposition for farther combat.

'I acknowledge the debt,' he said, sinking his battle-axe, and retreating two steps from his antagonist, who stood in astonishment, scarcely recovered from the stunning effect of the blow by which he was so nearly prostrated. He sank the blade of his battle-axe in imitation of his antagonist, and seemed to wait in suspense what was to be the next process of the combat. 'I acknowledge my debt,' said the valiant Count of Paris, 'alike to Bertha of Britain and to the Almighty, who has preserved me from the crime of ungrateful blood-guiltiness. You have seen the fight, gentlemen,' turning to Tancred and his chivalry, 'and can testify, on your honour, that it has been maintained fairly on both sides, and without advantage on either. I presume my honourable antagonist has by this time satisfied the desire which brought me under his challenge, and which certainly had no taste in it of personal or private quarrel. On my part, I retain towards him such a sense of personal obligation as would render my continuing this combat, unless compelled to it by self-defence, a shameful and sinful action.'[1]

Alexius gladly embraced the terms of truce, which he was

[1] See Chronicle of Lalain. Note 11.

far from expecting, and threw down his warder, in signal that the duel was ended. Tancred, though somewhat surprised, and perhaps even scandalised, that a private soldier of the Emperor's guard should have so long resisted the utmost efforts of so approved a knight, could not but own that the combat had been fought with perfect fairness and equality, and decided upon terms dishonourable to neither party. The Count's character being well known and established amongst the crusaders, they were compelled to believe that some motive of a most potent nature formed the principle upon which, very contrary to his g . al practice, he had proposed a cessation of the combat be.ore it was brought to a deadly, or at least to a decisive, conclusion. The edict of the Emperor upon the occasion, therefore, passed into a law, acknowledged by the assent of the chiefs present, and especially affirmed and gratulated by the shouts of the assembled spectators.

But perhaps the most interesting figure in the assembly was that of the bold Varangian, arrived so suddenly at a promotion of military renown which the extreme difficulty he had experienced in keeping his ground against Count Robert had prevented him from anticipating, although his modesty had not diminished the indomitable courage with which he maintained the contest. He stood in the middle of the lists, his face ruddy with the exertion of the combat, and not less so from the modest consciousness proper to the plainness and simplicity of his character, which was disconcerted by finding himself the central point of the gaze of the multitude.

'Speak to me, my soldier,' said Alexius, strongly affected by the gratitude which he felt was due to Hereward upon so singular an occasion — 'speak to thine Emperor as his superior, for such thou art at this moment, and tell him if there is any manner, even at the expense of half his kingdom, to atone for his own life saved, and, what is yet dearer, for the honour of his country, which thou hast so manfully defended and preserved?'

'My lord,' answered Hereward, 'your Imperial Highness values my poor services over highly, and ought to attribute them to the noble Count of Paris — first, for his condescending to accept of an antagonist so mean in quality as myself; and next, in generously relinquishing victory when he might have achieved it by an additional blow; for I here confess before your Majesty, my brethren, and the assembled Grecians, that my power of protracting the combat was ended when the gallant Count, by his generosity, put a stop to it.'

'Do not thyself that wrong, brave man,' said Count Robert; 'for I vow to Our Lady of the Broken Lances that the combat was yet within the undetermined doom of Providence when the pressure of my own feelings rendered me incapable of continuing it, to the necessary harm, perhaps to the mortal damage, of an antagonist to whom I owe so much kindness. Choose, therefore, the recompense which the generosity of thy Emperor offers in a manner so just and grateful, and fear not lest mortal voice pronounces that reward unmerited which Robert of Paris shall avouch with his sword to have been gallantly won upon his own crest.'

'You are too great, my lord, and too noble,' answered the Anglo-Saxon, 'to be gainsaid by such as I am, and I must not awaken new strife between us by contesting the circumstances under which our combat so suddenly closed, nor would it be wise or prudent in me further to contradict you. My noble Emperor generously offers me the right of naming what he calls my recompense; but let not his generosity be dispraised, although it is from you, my lord, and not from his Imperial Highness, that I am to ask a boon, to me the dearest to which my voice can give utterance.'

'And that,' said the Count, 'has reference to Bertha, the faithful attendant of my wife?'

'Even so,' said Hereward; 'it is my proposal to request my discharge from the Varangian Guard, and permission to share in your lordship's pious and honourable vow for the recovery of Palestine, with liberty to fight under your honoured banner, and permission from time to time to recommend my love-suit to Bertha, the attendant of the Countess of Paris, in the hope that it may find favour in the eyes of her noble lord and lady. I may thus finally hope to be restored to a country which I have never ceased to love over the rest of the world.'

'Thy service, noble soldier,' said the Count, 'shall be as acceptable to me as that of a born earl; nor is there an opportunity of acquiring honour which I can shape for thee to which, as it occurs, I will not gladly prefer thee. I will not boast of what interest I have with the King of England, but something I can do with him, and it shall be strained to the uttermost to settle thee in thine own beloved native country.'

The Emperor then spoke. 'Bear witness, heaven and earth, and you my faithful subjects, and you my gallant allies — above all, you my bold and true Varangian Guard, that we would rather have lost the brightest jewel from our imperial crown

than have relinquished the service of this true and faithf Anglo-Saxon. But since go he must and will, it shall be u study to distinguish him by such marks of beneficence as ma make it known through his future life that he is the perso to whom the Emperor Alexius Comnenus acknowledged a deb larger than his empire could discharge. You, my Lord Tancre and your principal leaders, will sup with us this evening, an to-morrow resume your honourable and religious purpose o pilgrimage. We trust both the combatants will also oblige u by their presence. Trumpets, give the signal for dismission.'

The trumpets sounded accordingly, and the different classe of spectators, armed and unarmed, broke up into various parties or formed into their military ranks, for the purpose of thei return to the city.

The screams of women, suddenly and strangely raised, were the first thing that arrested the departure of the multitude when those who glanced their eyes back saw Sylvan, the great ourang-outang, produce himself in the lists, to their surprise and astonishment. The women, and many of the men who were present, unaccustomed to the ghastly look and savage appearance of a creature so extraordinary, raised a yell of terror so loud that it discomposed the animal who was the occasion of its being raised. Sylvan, in the course of the night, having escaped over the garden-wall of Agelastes, and clambered over the rampart of the city, found no difficulty in hiding himself in the lists which were in the act of being raised, having found a lurking-place in some dark corner under the seats of the spectators. From this he was probably dislodged by the tumult of the dispersing multitude, and had been compelled, therefore, to make an appearance in public when he least desired it, not unlike that of the celebrated Pulicinello, at the conclusion of his own drama, when he enters in mortal strife with the Foul Fiend himself — a scene which scarcely excites more terror among the juvenile audience than did the unexpected apparition of Sylvan among the spectators of the duel. Bows were bent and javelins pointed by the braver part of the soldiery against an animal of an appearance so ambiguous, and whom his uncommon size and grizzly look caused most who beheld him to suppose either the Devil himself or the apparition of some fiendish deity of ancient days whom the heathens worshipped. Sylvan had so far improved such opportunities as had been afforded him as to become sufficiently aware that the attitudes assumed by so many mili-

tary men inferred immediate danger to his person, from which he hastened to shelter himself by flying to the protection of Hereward, with whom he had been in some degree familiarised. He seized him, accordingly, by the cloak, and, by the absurd and alarmed look of his fantastic features, and a certain wild and gibbering chatter, endeavoured to express his fear and to ask protection. Hereward understood the terrified creature, and, turning to the Emperor's throne, said aloud — 'Poor frightened being, turn thy petition, and gestures, and tones to a quarter which, having to-day pardoned so many offences which were wilfully and maliciously schemed, will not be, I am sure, obdurate to such as thou, in thy half-reasoning capacity, mayst have been capable of committing.'

The creature, as is the nature of its tribe, caught from Hereward himself the mode of applying with most effect his gestures and pitiable supplication, while the Emperor, notwithstanding the serious scene which had just past, could not help laughing at the touch of comedy flung into it by this last incident.

'My trusty Hereward,' he said, '(aside — I will not again call him Edward if I can help it) — thou art the refuge of the distressed, whether it be man or beast, and nothing that sues through thy intercession, while thou remainest in our service, shall find its supplication in vain. Do thou, good Hereward,' for the name was now pretty well established in his imperial memory, 'and such of thy companions as know the habits of the creature, lead him back to his old quarters in the Blacquernal; and that done, my friend, observe that we request thy company, and that of thy faithful mate Bertha, to partake supper at our court with our wife and daughter, and such of our servants and allies as we shall request to share the same honour. Be assured that, while thou remainest with us, there is no point of dignity which shall not be willingly paid to thee. And do thou approach, Achille Tatius, as much favoured by thine emperor as before this day dawned. What charges are against thee have been only whispered in a friendly ear which remembers them not, unless — which Heaven forefend! — their remembrance is renewed by fresh offences.'

Achilles Tatius bowed till the plume of his helmet mingled with the mane of his fiery horse, but held it wisest to forbear any answer in words, leaving his crime and his pardon to stand upon those general terms in which the Emperor had expressed them.

Once more the multitude of all ranks returned on their wa to the city, nor did any second interruption arrest their marc Sylvan, accompanied by one or two Varangians, who led him i a sort of captivity, took his way to the vaults of the Blacquerna which were in fact his proper habitation.

Upon the road to the city, Harpax, the notorious corporal o the Immortal Guards, held a discourse with one or two of hi own soldiers, and of the citizens who had been members of th late conspiracy.

'So,' said Stephanos, the prize-fighter, 'a fine affair we hav made of it, to suffer ourselves to be all anticipated and betraye by a thick-skulled Varangian; every chance turning against u as they would against Corydon, the shoemaker, if he were t defy me to the circus. Ursel, whose death made so muc work, turns out not to be dead after all; and, what is worse he lives not to our advantage. This fellow Hereward, who wa yesterday no better than myself — what do I say? better! h was a great deal worse, an insignificant nobody in every re spect — is now crammed with honours, praises, and gifts, till he wellnigh returns what they have given him, and the Cæsar and the Acolyte, our associates, have lost the Emperor's love and confidence, and if they are suffered to survive, it must be like the same domestic poultry, whom we pamper with food one day, that upon the next their necks may be twisted for spit or pot.'

'Stephanos,' replied the centurion, 'thy form of body fits thee well for the *palestra*, but thy mind is not so acutely formed as to detect that which is real from that which is only probable in the political world, of which thou art now judging. Considering the risk incurred by lending a man's ear to a conspiracy, thou oughtest to reckon it a saving in every particular where he escapes with his life and character safe. This has been the case with Achilles Tatius and with the Cæsar. They have remained also in their high places of trust and power, and may be confident that the Emperor will hardly dare to remove them at a future period, since the possession of the full knowledge of their guilt has not emboldened him to do so. Their power, thus left with them, is in fact ours; nor is there a circumstance to be supposed which can induce them to betray their confederates to the government. It is much more likely that they will remember them with the probability of renewing, at a fitter time, the alliance which binds them together. Cheer up thy noble resolution, therefore, my prince of the circus, and think that thou shalt still retain that predomin-

influence which the favourites of the amphitheatre are sure to possess over the citizens of Constantinople.'

'I cannot tell,' answered Stephanos; 'but it gnaws at my heart like the worm that dieth not to see this beggarly foreigner betray the noblest blood in the land, not to mention the best athlete in the *palestra*, and move off not only without punishment for his treachery, but with praise, honour, and preferment.'

'True,' said Harpax; 'but observe, my friend, that he does move off to purpose. He leaves the land, quits the corps in which he might claim preferment and a few vain honours, being valued at what such trifles amount to. Hereward, in the course of one or two days, shall be little better than a disbanded soldier, subsisting by the poor bread which he can obtain as a follower of this beggarly count, of which he is rather bound to dispute with the infidel, by encountering with his battle-axe the Turkish sabres. What will it avail him amidst the disasters, the slaughter, and the famine of Palestine that he once upon a time was admitted to supper with the Emperor? We know Alexius Comnenus: he is willing to discharge, at the highest cost, such obligations as are incurred to men like this Hereward; and, believe me, I think that I see the wily despot shrug his shoulders in derision when one morning he is saluted with the news of a battle in Palestine lost by the crusaders, in which his old acquaintance has fallen a dead man. I will not insult thee by telling thee how easy it might be to acquire the favour of a gentlewoman in waiting upon a lady of quality; nor do I think it would be difficult, should that be the object of the prize-fighter, to acquire the property of a large baboon like Sylvan, which no doubt would set up as a juggler any Frank who had meanness of spirit to propose to gain his bread in such a capacity from the alms of the starving chivalry of Europe. But he who can stoop to envy the lot of such a person ought not to be one whose chief personal distinctions are sufficient to place him first in rank over all the favourites of the amphitheatre.'

There was something in this sophistical kind of reasoning which was but half-satisfactory to the obtuse intellect of the prize-fighter, to whom it was addressed, although the only answer which he attempted was couched in this observation—

'Ay, but, noble centurion, you forget that, besides empty honours, this Varangian Hereward, or Edward, whichever is his name, is promised a mighty donative of gold.'

'Marry, you touch me there,' said the centurion; 'and when you tell me that the promise is fulfilled, I will willingly agree that the Anglo-Saxon hath gained something to be envied for; but while it remains in the shape of a naked promise, you shall pardon me, my worthy Stephanos, if I hold it of no more account than the mere pledges which are distributed among ourselves as well as to the Varangians, promising upon future occasions mints of money, which we are likely to receive at the same time with the last year's snow. Keep up your heart, therefore, noble Stephanos, and believe not that your affairs are worse for the miscarriage of this day; and let not thy gallant courage sink, but, remembering those principles upon which it was called into action, believe that thy objects are not the less secure because fate has removed their acquisition to a more distant day.' The veteran and unbending conspirator, Harpax, thus strengthened for some future renewal of their enterprise the failing spirits of Stephanos.

After this, such leaders as were included in the invitation given by the Emperor repaired to the evening meal, and, from the general content and complaisance expressed by Alexius and his guests of every description, it could little have been supposed that the day just passed over was one which had inferred a purpose so dangerous and treacherous.

The absence of the Countess Brenhilda during this eventful day created no small surprise to the Emperor and those in his immediate confidence, who knew her enterprising spirit, and the interest she must have felt in the issue of the combat. Bertha had made an early communication to the Count that his lady, agitated with the many anxieties of the few preceding days, was unable to leave her apartment. The valiant knight, therefore, lost no time in acquainting his faithful countess of his safety; and afterwards joining those who partook of the banquet at the palace, he bore himself as if the least recollection did not remain on his mind of the perfidious conduct of the Emperor at the conclusion of the last entertainment. He knew, in truth, that the knights of Prince Tancred not only maintained a strict watch round the house where Brenhilda remained, but also, that they preserved a severe ward in the neighbourhood of the Blacquernal, as well for the safety of their heroic leader as for that of Count Robert, the respected companion of their military pilgrimage.

It was the general principle of the European chivalry that distrust was rarely permitted to survive open quarrels, and that

whatever was forgiven was dismissed from their recollection, as unlikely to recur; but on the present occasion there was a more than usual assemblage of troops, which the occurrences of the day had drawn together, so that the crusaders were called upon to be particularly watchful.

It may be believed that the evening passed over without any attempt to renew the ceremonial in the council-chamber of the lions, which had upon a former occasion terminated in such misunderstanding. Indeed, it would have been lucky if the explanation between the mighty Emperor of Greece and the chivalrous knight of Paris had taken place earlier; for reflection on what had passed had convinced the Emperor that the Franks were not a people to be imposed upon by pieces of clockwork and similar trifles, and that what they did not understand was sure, instead of procuring their awe or admiration, to excite their anger and defiance. Nor had it altogether escaped Count Robert that the manners of the Eastern people were upon a different scale from those to which he had been accustomed; that they neither were so deeply affected by the spirit of chivalry nor, in his own language, was the worship of the Lady of the Broken Lances so congenial a subject of adoration. This notwithstanding, Count Robert observed that Alexius Comnenus was a wise and politic prince; his wisdom perhaps too much allied to cunning, but yet aiding him to maintain with great address that empire over the minds of his subjects which was necessary for their good, and for maintaining his own authority. He therefore resolved to receive with equanimity whatever should be offered by the Emperor, either in civility or in the way of jest, and not again to disturb an understanding which might be of advantage to Christendom, by a quarrel founded upon misconception of terms or misapprehension of manners. To this prudent resolution the Count of Paris adhered during the whole evening; with some difficulty, however, since it was somewhat inconsistent with his own fiery and inquisitive temper, which was equally desirous to know the precise amount of whatever was addressed to him, and to take umbrage at it, should it appear in the least degree offensive, whether so intended or not.

CHAPTER XXXIV

IT was not until after the conquest of Jerusalem that Cou
Robert of Paris returned to Constantinople, and, with h
wife, and such proportion of his followers as the sword an
pestilence had left after that bloody warfare, resumed his cours
to his native kingdom. Upon reaching Italy, the first care
the noble count and countess was to celebrate in princely styl
the marriage of Hereward and his faithful Bertha, who ha
added to their other claims upon their master and mistres
those acquired by Hereward's faithful services in Palestine
and no less by Bertha's affectionate ministry to her lady i
Constantinople.

As to the fate of Alexius Comnenus, it may be read at large
in the history of his daughter Anna, who has represented him a
the hero of many a victory, achieved, says the purple-born
in the third chapter and fifteenth book of her history, some
times by his arms and sometimes by his prudence. 'His bold
ness alone has gained some battles; at other times his success
has been won by stratagem. He has erected the most illustri-
ous of his trophies by confronting danger, by combating like
a simple soldier, and throwing himself bareheaded into the
thickest of the foe. But there are others,' continues the accom-
plished lady, 'which he gained an opportunity of erecting by
assuming the appearance of terror, and even of retreat. In a
word, he knew alike how to triumph either in flight or in pur-
suit, and remained upright even before those enemies who
appeared to have struck him down; resembling the military
implement termed the calthrop, which remains always upright
in whatever direction it is thrown on the ground.'

It would be unjust to deprive the Princess of the defence
she herself makes against the obvious charge of partiality.

'I must still once more repel the reproach which some bring
against me, as if my history was composed merely according to

the dictates of the natural love for parents which is engraved in the hearts of children. In truth, it is not the effect of that affection which I bear to mine, but it is the evidence of matter of fact, which obliges me to speak as I have done. Is it not possible that one can have at the same time an affection for the memory of a father and for truth? For myself, I have never directed my attempt to write history otherwise than for the ascertainment of the matter of fact. With this purpose, I have taken for my subject the history of a worthy man. Is it just that, by the single accident of his being the author of my birth, his quality of my father ought to form a prejudice against me which would ruin my credit with my readers? I have given, upon other occasions, proofs sufficiently strong of the ardour which I had for the defence of my father's interests, which those that know me can never doubt; but, on the present, I have been limited by the inviolable fidelity with which I respect the truth, which I should have felt conscience to have veiled, under pretence of serving the renown of my father.'[1]

This much we have deemed it our duty to quote, in justice to the fair historian; we will extract also her description of the Emperor's death, and are not unwilling to allow that the character assigned to the Princess by our own Gibbon has in it a great deal of fairness and of truth.

Notwithstanding her repeated protests of sacrificing rather to the exact and absolute truth than to the memory of her deceased parent, Gibbon remarks truly that, 'instead of the simplicity of style and narrative which wins our belief, an elaborate affectation of rhetoric and science betrays in every page the vanity of a female author. The genuine character of Alexius is lost in a vague constellation of virtues; and the perpetual strain of panegyric and apology awakens our jealousy to question the veracity of the historian and the merit of the hero. We cannot, however, refuse her judicious and important remark, that the disorders of the times were the misfortune and the glory of Alexius; and that every calamity which can afflict a declining empire was accumulated on his reign by the justice of Heaven and the vices of his predecessors.'[2]

The Princess accordingly feels the utmost assurance that a number of signs which appeared in heaven and on earth were interpreted by the soothsayers of the day as foreboding the

[1] *Alexiad*, chap. iii. book xv.
[2] Gibbon's *Roman Empire*, vol. ix. p. 84.

death of the Emperor. By these means, Anna Comnena assigned to her father those indications of consequence which ancient historians represent as necessary intimations of the sympathy of nature with the removal of great characters from the world; but she fails not to inform the Christian reader that her father's belief attached to none of these prognostics, and that even on the following remarkable occasion he maintained his incredulity; — A splendid statue, supposed generally to be a relic of paganism, holding in its hand a golden sceptre, and standing upon a base of porphyry, was overturned by a tempest, and was generally believed to be an intimation of the death of the Emperor. This, however, he generously repelled. Phidias, he said, and other great sculptors of antiquity, had the talent of imitating the human frame with surprising accuracy; but to suppose that the power of foretelling future events was reposed in these masterpieces of art would be to ascribe to their makers the faculties reserved by the Deity for himself, when he says, 'It is I who kill and make alive.' During his latter days, the Emperor was greatly afflicted with the gout, the nature of which has exercised the wit of many persons of science as well as of Anna Comnena. The poor patient was so much exhausted that, when the Empress was talking of most eloquent persons who should assist in the composition of his history, he said, with a natural contempt of such vanities, 'The passages of my unhappy life call rather for tears and lamentation than for the praises you speak of.'

A species of asthma having come to the assistance of the gout, the remedies of the physicians became as vain as the intercession of the monks and clergy, as well as the alms which were indiscriminately lavished. Two or three deep successive swoons gave ominous warning of the approaching blow; and at length was terminated the reign and life of Alexius Comnenus — a prince who, with all the faults which may be imputed to him, still possesses a real right, from the purity of his general intentions, to be accounted one of the best sovereigns of the Lower Empire.

For some time, the historian forgot her pride of literary rank, and, like an ordinary person, burst into tears and shrieks, tore her hair, and defaced her countenance, while the Empress Irene cast from her her princely habits, cut off her hair, changed her purple buskins for black mourning shoes, and her daughter Mary, who had herself been a widow, took a black robe from one of her own wardrobes, and presented it to her

mother. 'Even in the moment when she put it on,' says Anna Comnena, 'the Emperor gave up the ghost, and in that moment the sun of my life set.'

We shall not pursue her lamentations farther. She upbraids herself that, after the death of her father, that light of the world, she had also survived Irene, the delight alike of the East and of the West, and survived her husband also. 'I am indignant,' she said, 'that my soul, suffering under such torrents of misfortune, should still deign to animate my body. Have I not,' said she, 'been more hard and unfeeling than the rocks themselves; and is it not just that one who could survive such a father and mother, and such a husband, should be subjected to the influence of so much calamity? But let me finish this history, rather than any longer fatigue my readers with my unavailing and tragical lamentation.'

Having thus concluded her history, she adds the following two lines: —

> The learned Comnena lays her pen aside,
> What time her subject and her father died.[1]

These quotations will probably give the readers as much as they wish to know of the real character of this imperial historian. Fewer words will suffice to dispose of the other parties who have been selected from her pages, as persons in the foregoing drama.

There is very little doubt that the Count Robert of Paris, whose audacity in seating himself upon the throne of the Emperor gives a peculiar interest to his character, was in fact a person of the highest rank; being no other, as has been conjectured by the learned Ducange, than an ancestor of the house of Bourbon, which has so long given kings to France. He was a successor, it has been conceived, of the Counts of Paris, by whom the city was valiantly defended against the Normans, and an ancestor of Hugh Capet. There are several hypotheses upon this subject, deriving the well-known Hugh Capet, first from the family of Saxony; secondly, from St. Arnoul, afterwards Bishop of Altex [Metz]; third, from Nibilong; fourth, from the Duke of Bavaria; and fifth, from a natural son of the Emperor Charlemagne. Variously placed, but in

[1] Λῆξεν ὅπου βιότοιο Ἀλεξιος ὁ Κομνηνός
Ἔνθα καλὴ θυγάτηρ λῆξεν Ἀλεξιάδος.

each of these contested pedigrees, appears this Robert, surnamed the Strong, who was count of that district of which Paris was the capital, most peculiarly styled the County, or Isle, of France. Anna Comnena, who has recorded the bold usurpation of the Emperor's seat by this haughty chieftain, has also acquainted us with his receiving a severe, if not a mortal, wound at the battle of Dorylæum, owing to his neglecting the warlike instructions with which her father had favoured him on the subject of the Turkish wars. The antiquary who is disposed to investigate this subject may consult the late Lord Ashburnham's elaborate *Genealogy of the Royal House of France;* also a note of Ducange's on the Princess's history, arguing for the identity of her 'Robert of Paris, a haughty barbarian,' with the 'Robert called the Strong,' mentioned as an ancestor of Hugh Capet. Gibbon, vol. xi. p. 49, may also be consulted. The French antiquary and the English historian seem alike disposed to find the church called in the tale that of the Lady of the Broken Lances in that dedicated to St. Drausus, or Drosin, of Soissons, who was supposed to have peculiar influence on the issue of combats, and to be in the habit of determining them in favour of such champions as spent the night preceding at his shrine.

In consideration of the sex of one of the parties concerned, the Author has selected Our Lady of the Broken Lances as a more appropriate patroness than St. Drausus himself for the amazons, who were not uncommon in that age. Gaita, for example, the wife of Robert Guiscard, a redoubted hero, and the parent of a most heroic race of sons, was herself an amazon, fought in the foremost ranks of the Normans, and is repeatedly commemorated by our imperial historian, Anna Comnena.

The reader can easily conceive to himself that Robert of Paris distinguished himself among his brethren-at-arms and fellow-crusaders. His fame resounded from the walls of Antioch; but, at the battle of Dorylæum, he was so desperately wounded as to be disabled from taking a part in the grandest scene of the expedition. His heroic countess, however, enjoyed the great satisfaction of mounting the walls of Jerusalem, and in so far discharging her own vows and those of her husband. This was the more fortunate, as the sentence of the physicians pronounced that the wounds of the Count had been inflicted by a poisoned weapon, and that complete recovery was only to be hoped for by having recourse to his native air. After some

time spent in the vain hope of averting by patience this unpleasant alternative, Count Robert subjected himself to necessity, or what was represented as such, and, with his wife and the faithful Hereward, and all others of his followers who had been like himself disabled from combat, took the way to Europe by sea.

A light galley, procured at a high rate, conducted them safely to Venice, and from that then glorious city the moderate portion of spoil which had fallen to the Count's share among the conquerors of Palestine served to convey them to his own dominions, which, more fortunate than those of most of his fellow-pilgrims, had been left uninjured by their neighbours during the time of their proprietor's absence on the Crusade. The report that the Count had lost his health, and the power of continuing his homage to the Lady of the Broken Lances, brought upon him the hostilities of one or two ambitious or envious neighbours, whose covetousness was, however, sufficiently repressed by the brave resistance of the Countess and the resolute Hereward. Less than a twelvemonth was required to restore the Count of Paris to his full health, and to render him, as formerly, the assured protector of his own vassals and the subject in whom the possessors of the French throne reposed the utmost confidence. This latter capacity enabled Count Robert to discharge his debt towards Hereward in a manner as ample as he could have hoped or expected. Being now respected alike for his wisdom and his sagacity, as much as he always was for his intrepidity and his character as a successful crusader; he was repeatedly employed by the court of France in settling the troublesome and intricate affairs in which the Norman possessions of the English crown involved the rival nations. William Rufus was not insensible to his merit, nor blind to the importance of gaining his good-will; and finding out his anxiety that Hereward should be restored to the land of his fathers, he took, or made, an opportunity, by the forfeiture of some rebellious noble, of conferring upon our Varangian a large district adjacent to the New Forest, being part of the scenes which his father chiefly frequented, and where it is said the descendants of the valiant squire and his Bertha have subsisted for many a long year, surviving turns of time and chance, which are in general fatal to the continuance of more distinguished families.

NOTES TO COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS

Note 1. — Bohemond of Antioch, p. 5

Bohemond, son of Robert Guiscard, the Norman conqueror of Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily, was, at the time when the first crusade began, Count of Tarentum. Though far advanced in life, he eagerly joined the expedition of the Latins, and became Prince of Antioch. For details of his adventures, death, and extraordinary character, see Gibbon, chaps. lviii., lix., and Mills's *History of the Crusades*, vol. i.

Note 2. — Constantinople, p. 9

The impression which the imperial city was calculated to make on such visitors as the crusaders of the West is given by the ancient French chronicler Villehardouin, who was present at the capture of 1203.

'When we had come,' he says, 'within three leagues, to a certain abbey, then we could plainly survey Constantinople. There the ships and the galleys came to anchor; and much did they who had never been in that quarter before gaze upon that city. That such a city could be in the world they had never conceived, and they were never weary of staring at the high walls and towers with which it was entirely encompassed, the rich palaces and lofty churches, of which there were so many that no one could have believed it, if he had not seen with his own eyes that city, the queen of all cities. And know that there was not so bold a heart there, that it did not feel some terror at the strength of Constantinople.' — Chap. lxvi.

Again, 'And now many of those of the host went to see Constantinople within, and the rich palaces and stately churches of which it possesses so many, and the riches of the place, which are such as no other city ever equalled. I need not speak of the sanctuaries, which are as many as are in all the world beside.' — Chap. c.

Note 3. — Varangian Guard, p. 13

Ducange has poured forth a tide of learning on this curious subject, which will be found in his notes on Villehardouin's *Constantinople under the French Emperors*. Paris, 1657, folio, p. 296. Gibbon's *History* may also be consulted, vol. x. p. 221. Villehardouin, in describing the siege of Constantinople, 1203, says, 'Li murs fu mult garnis d'Anglois et de Danois'; hence the dissertation of Ducange here quoted, and several articles besides in his Glossarium, as 'Varangi,' 'Warengangi,' etc. The etymology of the name[1] is left uncertain, though the German *fortganger*, *i. e.*

[1] [Munch, *Det Norske Folks Historie*, i. (1), p. 288, note 2, derives it from Old Norse *var*, Anglo-Sax *vær*, meaning 'those bound together by an oath.' It is without doubt connected with the Old Norse *verja*, Modern Swedish *värja*, German *wehren*, meaning 'to defend,' 'protect.' The name does not indicate any nationality, but is in Russian and Norse annals applied equally to all Scandinavians who went, mostly through Russia, to Myklegaard (the Great City), as they called Constantinople, to serve the Greek emperor.]

'forth-goer,' 'wanderer,' 'exile,' seems the most probable. The term occurs in various Italian and Sicilian documents, anterior to the establishment of the Varangian Guards at Constantinople, and collected by Muratori: as, for instance, in an edict of one of the Lombard kings —

'Omnes Warengangi, qui de exteris finibus in regni nostri finibus advenerint, seque sub scuto potestatis nostræ subdiderint, legibus nostris Longobardorum vivere debeant' [vol. i. p. 48]; and in another, 'De Warengangis nobilibus, mediocribus, et rusticis hominibus, qui usque nunc in terrâ vestrâ fugiti sunt, habeatis eos.' — *Muratori*, vol. ii. p. 261.

With regard to the origin of the Varangian Guard, the most distinct testimony is that of Ordericus Vitalis, who says: —

When, therefore, the English had lost their liberty, they turned themselves with zeal to discover the means of throwing off the unaccustomed yoke. Some fled to Sueno, King of the Danes, to excite him to the recovery of the inheritance of his grandfather, Canute. Not a few fled into exile in other regions, either from the mere desire of escaping from under the Norman rule, or in the hope of acquiring wealth, and so being one day in a condition to renew the struggle at home. Some of these, in the bloom of youth, penetrated into a far distant land, and offered themselves to the military service of the Constantinopolitan Emperor — that wise prince, against whom Robert Guiscard, Duke of Apulia, had then raised all his forces. . . . The English exiles were favourably received, and opposed in battle to the Normans, for whose encounter the Greeks themselves were too weak. Alexius began to build a town for the English, a little above Constantinople, at a place called Chevetot, but the trouble of the Normans from Sicily still increasing, he soon recalled them to the capital, and intrusted the principal palace with all its treasures to their keeping. This was the method in which the Saxon English found their way to Ionia, where they still remain, highly valued by the Emperor and the people. — Book iv.

Note 4. — Immortals, p. 55

The Ἀθάνατοι, or Immortals, of the army of Constantinople were a select body, so named in imitation of the ancient Persians. They were first embodied, according to Ducange, by Michael [illegible]cas.

Note 5. — King of France, p. 74

Ducange pours out a whole ocean of authorities to show that the king of France was in those days styled *rex*, by way of eminence. See his notes on *The Alexiad*. Anna Comnena in her history makes Hugh of Vermandois assume to himself the titles which could only, in the most enthusiastic Frenchman's opinion, have been claimed by his elder brother, the reigning monarch.

Note 6. — Labarum, p. 118

Ducange fills half a column of his huge page with the mere names of the authors who have written at length on the Labarum, or principal standard of the empire for the time of Constantine. It consisted of a spear of silver, or plated with that metal, having suspended from a cross beam below the spoke a small square silken banner, adorned with portraits of the reigning family, and over these the famous monogram which expresses at once the figure of the cross and the initial letters of the name of Christ. The bearer of the Labarum was an officer of high rank down to the last days of the Byzantine government. — See Gibbon, chap. xx.

Ducange seems to have proved, from the evidence of coins and triumphal monuments, that a standard of the form of the Labarum was used by various barbarous nations long before it was adopted by their Roman conquerors, and he is of opinion that its name also was borrowed from either Teutonic Germany, or Celtic Gaul, or Sclavonic Illyria. It is certain that

either the German language or the Welsh may afford at this day a perfectly satisfactory etymon, *lapheer* [*lappenheer*] in the former, and *labhair* in the latter, having precisely the same meaning — 'the cloth of the host.'

The form of the Labarum may still be recognised in the banners carried in ecclesiastical processions, in all Roman Catholic countries.

Note 7. — Gaita, p. 127

This amazon makes a conspicuous figure in Anna Comnena's account of her father's campaigns against Robert Guiscard. On one occasion (*Alexiad*, lib. iv. p. 93), she represents her as thus recalling the fugitive soldiery of her husband to their duty — 'Ἡ δέ γε Γαΐτα . . . Παλλὰς ἄλλη, κἂν μὴ Ἀθήνη . . . κατ' αὐτῶν μεγίστην ἀφιεῖσα φωνήν, μονονοὺ τὸ Ὁμηρικὸν ἔπος τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λέγων ἐφιεῖ· 'μέχρι πόσου φεύξεσθε; στῆτε, ἄνερες ἔστε.' ὡς δὲ ἐπὶ φεύγοντας τούτους ἰώρα, δόρυ μακρὸν ἀναγκαλισαμένη, ὅλους ῥοπῆρας ἐνδοῦσα κατὰ τῶν φευγόντων ἴεται. — That is, exhorting them, in all but Homeric language, at the top of her voice; and when this failed, brandishing a long spear, and rushing upon the fugitives at the utmost speed of her horse. This heroic lady, according to the *chronique scandaleuse* of those days, was afterwards deluded by some cunning overtures of the Greek Emperor, and poisoned her husband in expectation of gaining a place on the throne of Constantinople. Ducange, however, rejects the story, and so does Gibbon.

Note 8. — Count of Tholouse, p. 169

Raymond Count of Tholouse and St. Giles, Duke of Narbonne, and Marquis of Provence, an aged warrior who had won high distinction in the contests against the Saracens in Spain, was the chief leader of the crusaders from the South of France. His title of St. Giles is corrupted by Anna Comnena into Sangeles, by which name she constantly mentions him in *The Alexiad*.

Note 9. — Crusaders' Punishment, p. 276

Persons among the crusaders found guilty of certain offences did penance in a dress of tar and feathers, though it is supposed a punishment of modern invention.

Note 10. — Latin Quotations, p. 288

The lines of Juvenal imitated by Johnson in his *London* —

> All sciences a fasting Monsieur knows;
> And bid him go to Hell — to Hell he goes.

'Do thou cultivate justice: for thee and for others there remains an avenger.' — Ovid, *Met.*

Note 11. — Chronicle of Lalain, p. 373

In the Diary of Sir Walter Scott (19th February 1826) he writes: — 'Being troubled with thick-coming fancies, and a slight palpitation of the heart, I have been reading the Chronicle of the Good Knight Messire Jacques de Lalain — curious, but dull, from the constant repetition of the same species of combats in the same style and phrase. It is like washing bushels of sand for a grain of gold. . . . Still, things occur to one. Some-

thing might be made out of . . . a tale of chivalry, taken from the passage of arms which Jacques de Lalain maintained for the first day of every month for a twelvemonth.' And in a footnote Mr. Lockhart says, 'This hint was taken up in *Count Robert of Paris*.'

A brief notice of the heroic knight-errant referred to may, therefore, not be considered out of place here.

The *Chronique du Bon Chevalier Messire Jacques de Lalain, Frère et Compagnon de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or*, attributed to Messire Georges Chastellain, forms vol. xxi. of the *Collection des Chroniques Nationales Françaises*, published by J. A. Buchon, of which there is a set in the Abbotsford Library. In a previous edition of this work, published at Bruxelles, 1634, small 4to, it is called 'Histoire,' in place of 'Chronique,' and has a small portrait of the *Bon Chevalier* with the collar of the Golden Fleece, carefully engraved, evidently from an original miniature painting. It may be added that this work was translated into French verse, and amplified, by a Flemish knight, Messire Jean d'Ennetières, Sieur de Beaumetz. It was published at Tournay in 1633, with the title, *Le Chevalier sans Reproche, Jacques de Lalain;* and is divided into sixteen books, with an engraved design to each. Had Sir Walter set himself to read this version he might have well described it as insufferably dull. The circumstance, however, that gives a special interest to this work is the portion that relates to Scotland in the reign of James the Second.

The *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* contains a long article, 'LALAIN ou LALAING (Jacques, dit Jacquet de), surnommé le Bon Chevalier,' from which it appears that he was born about 1422, and when sixteen years of age was sent to the court of Adolphus Duke of Cleves; he afterwards continued to signalise himself by his exploits as the representative of a knight-errant. His biographer remarks that, on the first point of view of his historical career, 'Ce personnage, on le voit, n'offre qu'un intérêt médiocre. Mais il n'en est pas de même si on le considère au point de vue des mœurs du temps. Jacques de Lalain nous offre en effet la personnification d'un type aussi curieux qu'intéressant. Il fut un des derniers représentants de l'idéal chevaleresque. L'imagination s'attache avec sympathie au destin de ce personnage, exalté jusqu'à l'héroïsme par la foi qui l'anime.'

The chapters in the French Chronicle that relate to Scotland are very curious, but are too long to be quoted. Jacques de Lalain, hearing of the prowess of Sir James of Douglas, sent a letter of challenge by a herald to Scotland, dated July 1448. The reply, accepting the challenge, is dated at Edinburgh, 24th September 1448. He accordingly arrived in Scotland in the beginning of 1449, and the tournament took place during the time of Lent, at Stirling, in the presence of the Scottish king and the nobility, and a great concourse of people. To quote the words of a well-known historian[1] — 'Two Burgundians of the noble house of Lalain, and a third styled the squire Melyades, challenged two of the Douglases, and Halket, to fight with the lance, battle-ax, sword, and dagger. After a festival of some days, the combatants entered the lists, clothed in velvet, and proceeded to their pavilions to arm; the Earl of Douglas himself, attended by not less than about five thousand followers, accompanying the Scottish champions. After having been solemnly knighted by the King, the parties engaged; the spears were soon thrown away; one of the Douglases was felled by a battle-ax, and the combat becoming unequal, the King threw down his baton, the signal of its termination.'

At a chapter of the order of the Golden Fleece, the 4th of May 1451, Jacques de Lalain was elected a knight of that distinguished order; but was slain by a cannon-ball at the siege of the Château de Poucques, 4th July 1453, aged thirty-two (*Laing*).

[1] Pinkerton's *History* [*of Scotland*], vol. i. p. 207 [1797].

GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

Abydos, a town on the Asiatic side of the Hellespont or Dardanelles

Abye, to pay for, atone for

Achitophel, the counsellor of King David

Agamemnon, commander of the Greeks in the Trojan War

Alexandrian library, the greatest collection of books in the ancient Greek world, was preserved at Alexandria in Egypt, and burnt in 640 by the Arab conqueror, Amr ibn al-As

Aliquando dormitat Homerus, Horace is caught napping sometimes

All' erta! all' erta, etc. (p. 275), Look out! look out! Here 's booty!

Altex (p. 385), evidently Metz, of which see Arnulf was bishop

Ambidexter, double-handed; double-dealing

Androcles and the Lion, the story of the Roman slave who removed a thorn from the paw of a wild lion, and afterwards was recognised by it when cast into the arena to be torn to pieces by wild animals

Antoninus. *See* **Marcus** Aurelius Antoninus

Anubis, a god of the ancient Egyptians, usually represented with a jackal's head

Apelles, the most celebrated painter of ancient Greece, lived in the 4th century

Apis, an ancient Egyptian deity, worshipped in the form of a bull

Arblast, a cross-bow

Argive, Greek

Argus's tail, eyes of. After the death of Argus, his hundred eyes were placed in the tail of the peacock

Armipotent, mighty in arms, an epithet of Mars, the Roman god of war

Astucious, astute, crafty

Atmeidan, a circus, exercise ring

Attaint, a successful hit, stroke

Ballantynian ordeal, printing. Scott's novels were first printed by the brothers John and James Ballantyne

Bel, a Babylonian god, corresponding to the Canaanite god Baal

Bezant, or byzant, a gold coin = 10s. to 20s.

Bevis of Hampton, the hero of a mediæval romance

Black Douglas, or **Good Sir James of Douglas**, the loyal supporter of Robert Bruce, called Black from his swarthy complexion

Bœotia, a district of ancient Greece, the inhabitants of which were proverbial for their rude and unsociable manners

Bona Dea, peculiarly the goddess of women amongst the ancient Romans

Bradamante, a female warrior in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*

Bruited, noised abroad

Brutus, elder, the hero who, in the legendary history of Rome, feigned idiocy to escape the tyranny of Tarquin the Proud

Caccabulum, a small cooking-pot; (p. 255) a clean dish

Calif, the head of the Mohammedan world, both politically and religiously

Caltrop, four iron spikes fixed into a ball in such a way that, when any three rest on the ground, the fourth projects upwards; this instrument was put down where cavalry were expected to charge

Cap-à-pie, from head to foot

Cathedral clock. Striking clocks are known to have existed in the 12th century; the earliest forerunner of modern clocks is believed to have been invented in the 9th century

Clronice, the Byzantine maiden stabbed by mistake by Pausanias the Spartan

Clovis, king of the Franks, adopted Christianity in 496

Comus, in ancient Greek mythology, the god of revelry

Constantinople, was inaugurated as the new capital of the Roman Empire in 330

Contra omnes mortales, against all men
Corps de garde, the guard
Corynetes, the surname of Periphetes, a robber of Epidaurus in Greece, who slew travellers with an iron club
Crown, parsley. *See* Paraley crown
Cumans, or **Comans**, Turkish tribes settled in what is now Moldavia and south-west Russia
Cybele, the great mother, an ancient goddess of Asia Minor
Cydnus, a river in the south of Asia Minor
Cytherea, a name of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love; **Cytherean**, dedicated to Aphrodite (Venus)
Cythnos, one of the Ionian islands, anciently sacred to Aphrodite

Daidling-bit, a path for dawdling, sauntering on
Damascus, gate of (p. 16). *See* Genie and the prince
Dan, a title of familiarity used by some old English writers
Davus sum, non Œdipus, I am a simple man, not a guesser of riddles
'Did I but purpose,' etc. (p. x), from the poem *Henry and Emma*
Diogenes, lantern of. *See* Lantern of Diogenes
Dionedes, king of the Bistones, used to feed four savage horses with the bodies of all strangers he caught in his country, until he was slain by Hercules
Dionysius, ear of (p. 209). *See Fortunes of Nigel*, p. 401
Dotted, stupid
Dorylæum, in Phrygia, Asia Minor; there in 1097 the Crusaders defeated the Seljuk Turks led by their sultan Soliman
Draco, an Athenian lawgiver of the 7th century B.C., whose laws were of unusual severity
Drink hael, drink health
Dromond, a large transport vessel
Ducange, Charles Dufresne, Sieur du Cange, an erudite French scholar of the 17th century

En bert, in the rough, unpolished
En champ clos, in the lists, the ground inclosed for a tournament
Etymon, the root or original form of a word
Eumenides, the Furies, monsters of terror, in ancient Greek mythology
Evoe, evoe, exclamations used by the worshippers of Bacchus
Ex proposito, of express purpose

Faitour, an evil-doer, scoundrel
Felucca, a narrow open boat with two lateen sails, used in the Mediterranean
Fetter-bolt, presumably **fetterlock**, a shackle
Fleurs-de-lis ornées, scattered lilies, a heraldic term
Fortganger (in Modern High German only a philological, not an actual, form), from *fortgang*, 'going forth,' 'progress'
Four Hours, a light repast taken between dinner and supper, generally at four o'clock
Franklin, a yeoman, small landowner

Gaed, went
Gaitling, an infant, child
Gambaud, or **gambade**, a leap, spring
Gay, John, English poet, author of *The Beggar's Opera* (1728)
Genie and the prince (p. 16), an allusion to *The Arabian Nights*, 'Nour-eddin Ali and Bedreddin Hassan'
Goddess-born, Achilles, son of the goddess Thetis
Gossipred, the relationship of sponsor and god-child
'Grammaticus, rhetor,' etc. (p. 288), Grammarian, rhetorician, geometer, painter, manager of a wrestling-school, interpreter of omens, rope-dancer, physician, sage, he knew everything. A hungry, paltry Greek, he will go to heaven if you bid him do so
Gueldre, means the goose's puddle
Gymnosophist, an ancient Hindu philosopher and ascetic

Hero and Leander. Leander swam every night across the Hellespont, to visit Hero, guided by the light of her lamp, until, the lamp being extinguished one stormy night, Leander perished in the waves
Hiatus valde deplendi, gaps to be greatly deplored
Hussain, Prince. *See* Prince Hussain's tapestry

Ichor, a fluid that in the gods corresponded to the blood of human bodies
Ides of March, the 15th of March
Idumeans, or **Idumæans**, a people belonging to a district in the south of Palestine
Infinitus est numerus stultorum, the number of fools is infinite
Isthmian games, one of the four great athletic festivals of ancient Greece, were held every two years on the Isthmus of Corinth

Joinville, Sieur de, wrote a Life of Louis IX., who conducted a crusade in 1248-54

Ken, know
Kittle turn, a hard sentence, difficulty

Lantern of Diogenes (p. 214), an allusion to the cynical philosopher Diogenes, who, being asked why he went about with a lighted lantern in broad daylight, replied, that he was seeking for an honest man
Lapheer, correctly a compound of the Low German *lappen*, 'cloth,' and the High German *heer*, 'a host'
Lave, the remainder, rest
Lelies, the descriptive name given to the Arab shout of onset, *La ilaha illa 'llah*

Lemnos, an island in the Ægean Sea, about 40 miles from the Dardanelles

'**Les Anglois**,' etc. (p. 68), the English and Danes fought much with battle-axes

Leut ryme, permission to leave the room

Lingua franca, a corrupt language employed as a common medium of intercourse

Loretto, Our Lady's house of (p. 209), was, according to the legend, transported in the 13th century from Nazareth to Dalmatia, and thence in a single night to Italy

Lustre, a period of five years

Lycurgus, the great lawgiver of the ancient Spartans

Macaroni, a fop, beau of the 18th century

Manchester railroad (p. x). The Manchester and Liverpool Railway was opened in 1830, the year before the Introduction to this novel was written

Manichæans (p. 6), adherents of an ancient religious system, only in part Christian, which originated in Western Asia in the 3d century. They assisted Alexius against the Normans in 1081

Marcus (Aurelius) Antoninus, Roman emperor in the 2d century, renowned as a noble-minded heathen philosopher

Marphisa, a female warrior in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*

Maud, a shepherd's grey woollen plaid

Menelaus. *See* Homer's *Iliad*, Bk. xvii.

Michael Ducas, emperor of Constantinople from 1071 to 1078

'**Militat omnis amans**,' etc. (p. 223), every lover is a man-at-arms, and even Cupid has his camp

Mitylene, or **Mytilene**, also called **Lesbos**, an island off the west coast of Asia Minor

Mount Pisgah, the mountain, east of the Jordan, from which Moses viewed the Promised Land of Israel

Muckle, much

Muratori, Lodovico Antonio, Italian antiquary and historian, lived 1672 to 1750. He published a famous collection of Italian chronicles from the 5th to the 16th century

Musis severioribus, to graver and more arduous studies

Naxos, an island in the Ægean Sea, celebrated for its great fertility

Nibelong, probably the ancestor of the Burgundian tribe of the Nibelungen or Nifungen

Nicanor (p. 27). The Greek word 'nike' means 'victory'

Nicotian weed, tobacco

Niddering, or **nithing**, a worthless person, stamping a man as an outcast and utterly vile

Obeli, or **obol**, a coin of ancient Greece = 1½d.

Odin, the supreme god of the ancient Scandinavians. *Compare the Pirate*, Note 30, p. 462

(**Estrum**, torment, prick

Ofelli, a reference to an unpolished but upright countryman in Horace, *Satires*, ii. 2

Omnium, augustissimus, the most august or illustrious of all

Ordericus Vitalis, a Norman historian of the 11th century

Palestra, or **palæstra**, the arena where boxing and other athletic games were carried on

Pancration, an athletic contest which involved both wrestling and boxing

Panhypersebastos, the most august of the august

Par amours, unlawfully, illicitly

Parcel, in part, partly

Parsley crown (p. 16), a prize for athletic skill; such were the prizes given at the Isthmian games

Patroclus. *See* Homer's *Iliad*, Bk. xvii.

Paulicians (p. 6), a religious sect who originated in Armenia in the 7th century; their doctrines were partly Christian, partly Manichæan. They assisted Alexius against the Normans in 1081

Peleides, the son of Peleus, *i.e.* Achilles; his mother was the goddess Thetis

Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, who fought against the Greeks at Troy

Periapt, a charm, talisman

Perpending, weighing, considering

Phidias, the greatest sculptor of ancient Greece, in the 5th century B.C.

Phryne, a famous courtesan of ancient Greece, a woman of marvellous beauty

Pistrinum, a corn-mill worked by an ass or horse; slaves were sometimes harnessed to it as a mode of punishment

Pitcairn, Dr., a celebrated doctor and writer of Latin verse, of Edinburgh (1792-1813)

Porphyrogenita, born in the purple, *i.e.* of imperial birth

Prætor, a class of ancient Roman magistrates

Prætorian Bands, the imperial guards or household troops of the ancient Roman Empire

Praxiteles, one of the greatest sculptors of ancient Greece, lived in the 4th century B.C.

Prefect, or prefect, the title of various high officers in ancient Rome

Prerupt, abrupt, sudden

Prince and genie (p. 16). *See* Genie and the prince

Prince Houssain's tapestry. *See Arabian Nights*, 'Prince Ahmed'

Prior's heroine (p. x), Emma in the poem *Henry and Emma*

Procopius, the principal of the Byzantine historians, lived during the 6th century

Procrustes, the surname of an ancient Greek robber, who forced his victim to lie down on a bed which was either too short or too long, and then stretched or cut him until his body exactly fitted

Pneumatics, a demi-god, according to one legend, created man out of earth and water

'Propago contemptæ,' etc. (p. 330), truly a godless generation, very greedy of slaughter and full of violence; misquoted from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, i. 169

Propontis, the Sea of Marmora

Protosebastos, the fifth person in rank in the Eastern Roman Empire, the Emperor being the first, the Sebastocrator the second, the Cæsar the third

Pulcheria, Empress, sister of Theodosius, whom she succeeded in 450

Pulcinello, or **Punchinello**, a puppet, the prototype of Punch; also a typical comic character in early Italian comedy

Punctiuncula, trifling points, small matters

Questor, a class of ancient Roman magistrates

Quidnunc, one who knows or pretends to know all the news of the day

Quirites, a general name for the citizens of ancient Rome

Regis ad exemplum, after the king's example

Res tuas agas, attend to your own business

Robert of Apulia, known more commonly as Robert Guiscard

Rodomont, a commander in the Saracen army that fought against Charlemagne, in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*

Saale (p. 133), should obviously be **Meuse**, along which river and the Rhine the Franks (*see* p. 164) were for a long period settled. Charlemagne was a Frank, and was born at Aix-la-Chapelle, which is not far distant from the Meuse

Sabine vintage. *See* Horace, *Odes*, Bk. I. xx. 1

Sal, so

St. Anthony, in the 3d century, spent nearly twenty years as a solitary anchorite in a desert in Egypt

St. Arnoul, or **Arnulf**, bishop of Metz, and founder of the Carolingian dynasty of the kings of France

Sale lift, a sore or heavy burden, task

Sanctum sanctorum, the most private of all apartments

Scraw, or **straw**, to indicate, reveal, show

Scyrons, the inhabitants of Scyro, one of the Ægean islands, notorious for their piracies

Sebastocrator, the second person in rank in the Greek Empire. *See* p. 217; and, for the history of the title, and its relation to the title Cæsar, Gibbon, chap. liii.

Sebastos, august

Semée, strewn, sown

Sequin, a gold coin worth about 9s. 6d

Sestos, a town on the European side of the Hellespont or Dardanelles

Sibyl. *See* Tivoli

Sicarius, a stabber, assassin

Stadia, a Greek measure of distance = 200 yards

Stummed (wine), unfermented

Sub crimine falsi, under the penalty of being esteemed faithless

Susurrus, whisper, rumour

Sylvan, a faun, woodland deity, creature of the woods

Tales of the Genii, *or the Delightful Lessons of Horam, the Son of Asmar*, by Sir Charles Morell (James Ridley), 1765

Tanquam deus ex machina, like a god stepping down from the (theatrical) car (or other contrivance)

Taprobana, some island or country in the south-east of Asia; sometimes identified with Ceylon

Taranis, the supreme god of the Druids, the priests of the ancient Britons

Tasso has preferred (p. 363). Tancred is the hero of the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of the Italian Torquato Tasso

Thebe, the Arab chief onset

Thalestris, queen of Amazons in the time of Alexander the Great

Thema, a province or district of the Byzantine empire

Thetis, son of, Achilles

Tivoli, the modern name not many miles from Rome; there, beside a waterfall, stood a temple to the ancient prophetess the Sibyl

Tu inse Kaiwan, my emperor, my beloved

Topped his part (p. 363), done his part with skill and success. Gay's *Trivia* (*Squire and Cur*) exactly hit off Agelastes — 'The politician tope his cell, Who readily can lie by art'

Tranchefer, cleaver of, the name of Count Robert's sword

Trimalchio's banquet, described in the contemporary *Satyra* of the Roman writer Petronius Arbiter

Trinculo, the jester in Shakespeare's *Tempest*

'Tu cole justiciam,' etc. (p. 288), Do thou cultivate justice, there will come an avenger for thee and for others

Utinus atque optimus, best and best

Ultimus labor, the last work

Ultramontane, beyond the mountains — that is, north of the Alps

Varangian, the name of a class of Norse adventurers or soldiers. There is no language known by this name. The Varangians spoke Old Norse or Saxon, or rather Anglo-Saxon, is intended (see 44. *See further* [illegible] p. 389

Vavasour, a prince, vassal, great lord

'Veiller y vont,' etc. (p. xxvi), thither come to vigil such pilgrims as desire to engage in combat

Vera sapiens, the true man

VICIT LEO EX TRIBU JUDÆ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (*i. e.* Christ) hath conquered

VILLEHARDOUIN, GEOFFROI DE, a French chronicler of the 13th century

VULNERARY, relating to wounds

WAES HAEL, KAISAR, etc. (p. 43), Good health to thee, gracious and mighty emperor. For *mirrig* read *mirige*, and for *mechtigh* read *miehtig* or *mihtig*

WATER (up the), valley

WINDLESTRAW, a stalk of grass

XANTIPPE, the shrewish wife of the philosopher Socrates

YORK, DUKE OF, HIS REFORMATION OF THE ARMY (p. 25). Frederick Augustus, second son of George III., was commander-in-chief of the English army from 1798 to 1809, and effected many useful reforms

ZOE KAI PSYCHE, life and soul

ZOROASTER, the founder of the ancient religion of the fire-worshipping Parsees

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